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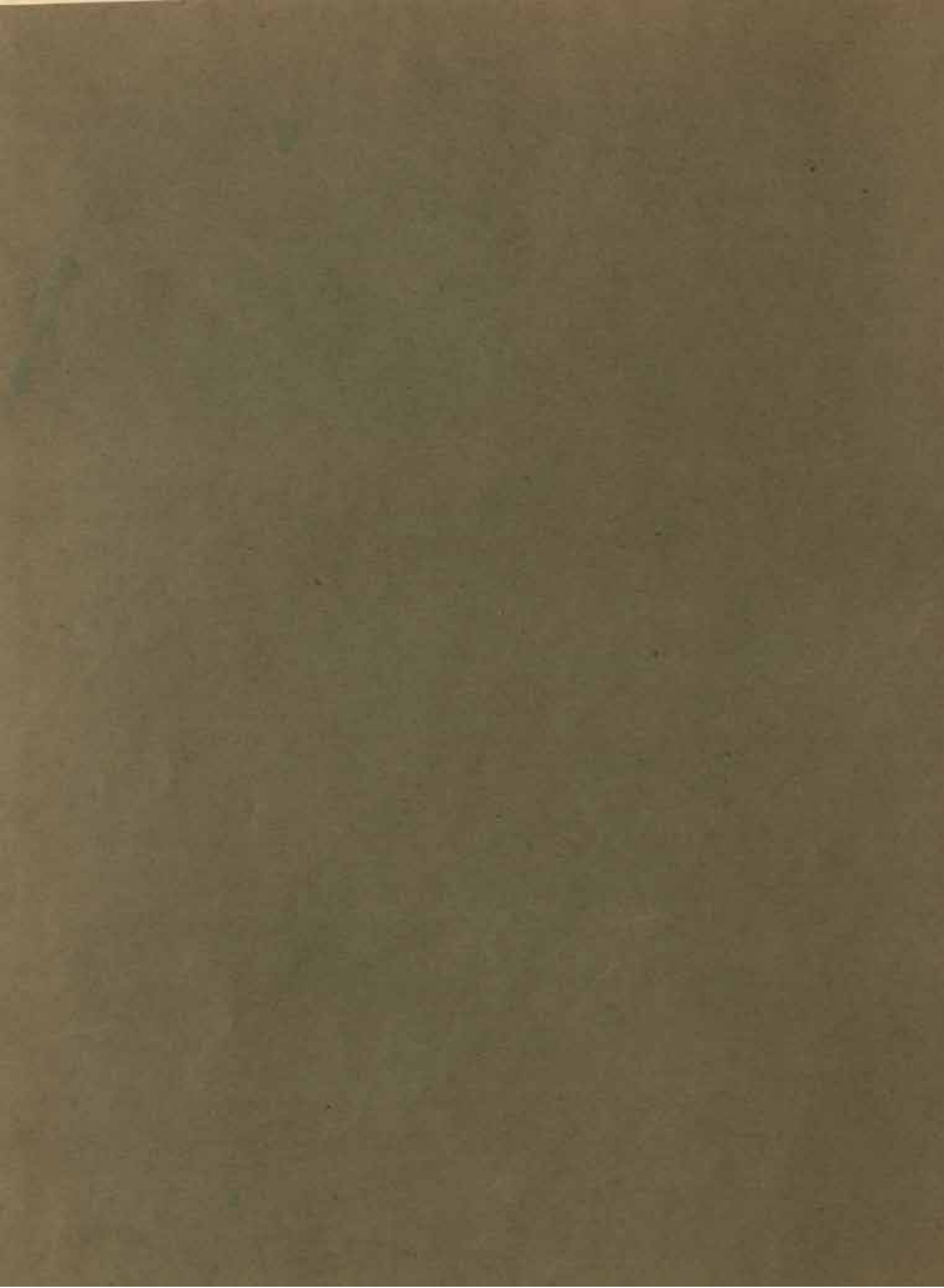
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**MASTERPIECES OF
INDIAN TERRACOTTAS**

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MASTERPIECES OF INDIAN TERRACOTTAS

M. K. DHAVALIKAR, M. A., Ph. D.
*Post-Graduate & Research Institute,
Deccan College, Pune*

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Preface

THE PRESENT BOOK IS A PART OF MY studies of ancient Indian Terracottas. Since it has been written for the layman as well as the student, I have tried to make it as simple and readable as possible by eliminating all jargon. It is therefore hoped that it will be useful to the reader, more so because of the copious illustrations.

The photographs of many of the terracottas were taken by my friend Sri Suresh Vasant who accompanied me to various museums in the country. In some cases the photographs were supplied by museums and other institutions. Many of the photo prints were made by Sri V. K. Nagpure, Photographer of the Deccan College Post-Graduate Research Institute, Poona.

I have given the measurements of the figures illustrated in most of the cases. But in a very few cases, where the figurines could not be removed from the show-cases, the measurements could not be taken and hence they are not given. I hope to be excused for this lapse.

I am happy to record that I received ungrudging co-operation from various museum authorities and private individuals whom I contacted. Their valuable help has been acknowledged separately.

In preparing the present monograph I have received help and co-operation from many individuals. Professor S. B. Deo, Head of the Department of Archaeology, Deccan College Post-Graduate Research Institute, Poona helped me in various ways and I must record my grateful thanks to him. Sri Suresh Vasant, Research Associate, Asian Art Archives, University of

Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich. (U.S.A.), took the photographs and supplied me the excellent prints. I owe him a deep debt of gratitude. Professor Walter M. Spink, Director of the Asian Art Archives, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor (U.S.A.), permitted Sri Suresh Vasant to take the photographs for me and supply me the prints. I am therefore equally beholden to him also. Some of the photo prints were prepared by Sri V. K. Nagpure, Photographer of the Deccan College, Poona. The line illustrations have been drawn by Sri S. K. Kulkarni and the map has been prepared by Sri Y. S. Rasar, Draughtsman, Department of Archaeology, University of Poona, Poona. I thank them all.

My grateful thanks are due to the Director, American Institute of Indian Studies, Ramnagar (Varanasi) for supplying me a number of photographs of terracottas.

Late Professor R. S. Gupte of the Marathwada University, a friend of mine, was keenly interested in the present work, and it was through him that I got into contact with M/s Taraporevala Sons & Co. Pvt. Ltd. Now that he is no more, I do not know how to express my gratitude to him.

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— M. K. DHAVALIKAR

Akshaya tritiya
Pune

Received free from the publisher, in lieu of photographs supplied.

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1. People's Art

THE TERRACOTTA ART HAS OFTEN BEEN described as the poor man's art. This may hold good in the case of the art of other countries, but not where India is concerned. Our ancient potter-artists have produced a prolific amount of clay figurines through the millenia and a casual glance at the entire range of terracottas will be enough to convince anyone that here it was not a poor man's art at all. The ancient Indian potter-artist had to cater to one and all, the prince and the pauper, the merchant and the priest, and to men and women from every strata of society. A king might order a variety of terracotta figures of auspicious trees, fruits and aquatic creatures to adorn his palace as Harsha did at the time of the marriage of his sister Rajyashri,¹ whereas a commoner would buy a few human and animal figurines for rituals. A farmer's child would be content with plain, undecorated toys while a young prince would play with toys brightly painted in variegated colours. A small terracotta votive tank was all that a husbandman's wife could afford, but a queen could and would order an impressive temple entirely built of moulded bricks and adorned all over with terracotta images. This only shows that the terracotta art of India was not a poor man's art, for every man and woman, from every walk of life, some time or other, patronised the artist in clay.

The ancient Indian potter-artist must have obviously been extremely busy in fashioning clay figurines day in and day out with such a heavy demand for his wares. This is amply borne out by the hundreds of figurines that have turned up at ancient sites in the country. The thematic range of the terracotta art is

therefore much more fascinating than that of stone sculpture. It goes to the credit of the ancient potter-artist that he mastered the technique of terracotta production and elevated the art to the heights of stone sculpture. Stylistically, there is a close correspondence between the terracottas and stone sculpture. It is no exaggeration to say that the terracottas outnumber stone images in the early period. And what is more, the earliest remains of Indian sculpture found so far are of clay and not of stone. All that has survived of Indian sculpture till the advent of the Imperial Mauryan rule is a host of terracotta figures of men and women, animals and birds. The terracotta art in India has a history of over five thousand years as compared to that of stone sculpture the earliest specimens of which make their appearance only in the third century B.C., with the only exception of a couple of examples from the Indus cities of the third millennium B.C. Thus, it is only the potter's art that connects us with the early farmers of South India, the pioneering colonizers of central and western India, and the first civilization of India—the Indus Civilization.

Since the remotest past, man has loved to make figures of clay and the art of clay modelling can be said to be as old as man himself. Unfortunately, the earliest stages of its development are not well documented. Fire was naturally, an important factor in the production of terracottas. Although the early Stone Age man in France knew the use of fire four hundred thousand years ago, it was the knowledge of making fire and its controlled use which was of vital importance. The

available evidence shows that the earliest artistic expression of man in clay goes back to 20,000 years. Indians too, fashioned images of men and women and animals in clay, but the terracotta art in India does not go as far back as the Old Stone Age period as it does in Europe. It is, however, not unlikely that the Stone Age man in India also used clay to give shape to his artistic longings and religious ideas. This is all the more probable for the earliest terracottas in India, on any showing, exhibit an advanced technique of modelling. Be that as it may, Indians have never been tired of exploiting the plasticity of clay and it is one of the few countries where terracottas were produced on an unimaginably large scale and for a variety of purposes, and the tradition continues till today in unbroken succession.

Clay as a medium of art-expression is generally easily available everywhere and can be modelled or pressed into any shape, thus satisfying the artistic urge of the common man. It can also be hardened by firing and can either be further painted or given colour glazes. The ancient Indians exploited this inexpensive medium for their artistic expression. The weakness of the Indian for clay is, in the main, due to its plasticity and easy availability in large quantities in the rich alluvium of the Indus and the Ganga valleys. This also explains the location of the main centres of the terracotta art in the north. The art did not flourish in the southern regions for want of fine clay, because the rivers in this area run through deep gorges and consequently do not bring or deposit fine silt on their banks. In the Deccan too, clay of the required quality was not available and the artists, therefore, had to work in kaolin that is found in some areas here. But except under the Satavahanas, the art did not flourish in the Deccan also.

Terracotta figurines were manufactured in large quantities in north India. They comprise human and animal figures, toys of various kinds, such as chariots, whistles

and rattles, and also figures of gods and goddesses and other related cult objects. There could be little doubt that a vast number of the figurines were toys for children and there is adequate evidence in ancient Indian literature which refers to the kinds of toys that should be given to the children of different age groups. A Sanskrit text, *Kashyapa Samhita*, which is a medical treatise revised and re-edited in the third century, tells us that a variety of terracotta toys, such as birds, animals, chariots, vehicles, boats, etc., should be placed in a circle and whatever toy the child picks up first from this lot, that toy should be taken to indicate the taste of the child and also his profession in future.² Dolls (*puttalika*) were also used as offerings to spirits so that they would not molest children. It is, however, difficult to know precisely which dolls were used as offerings.

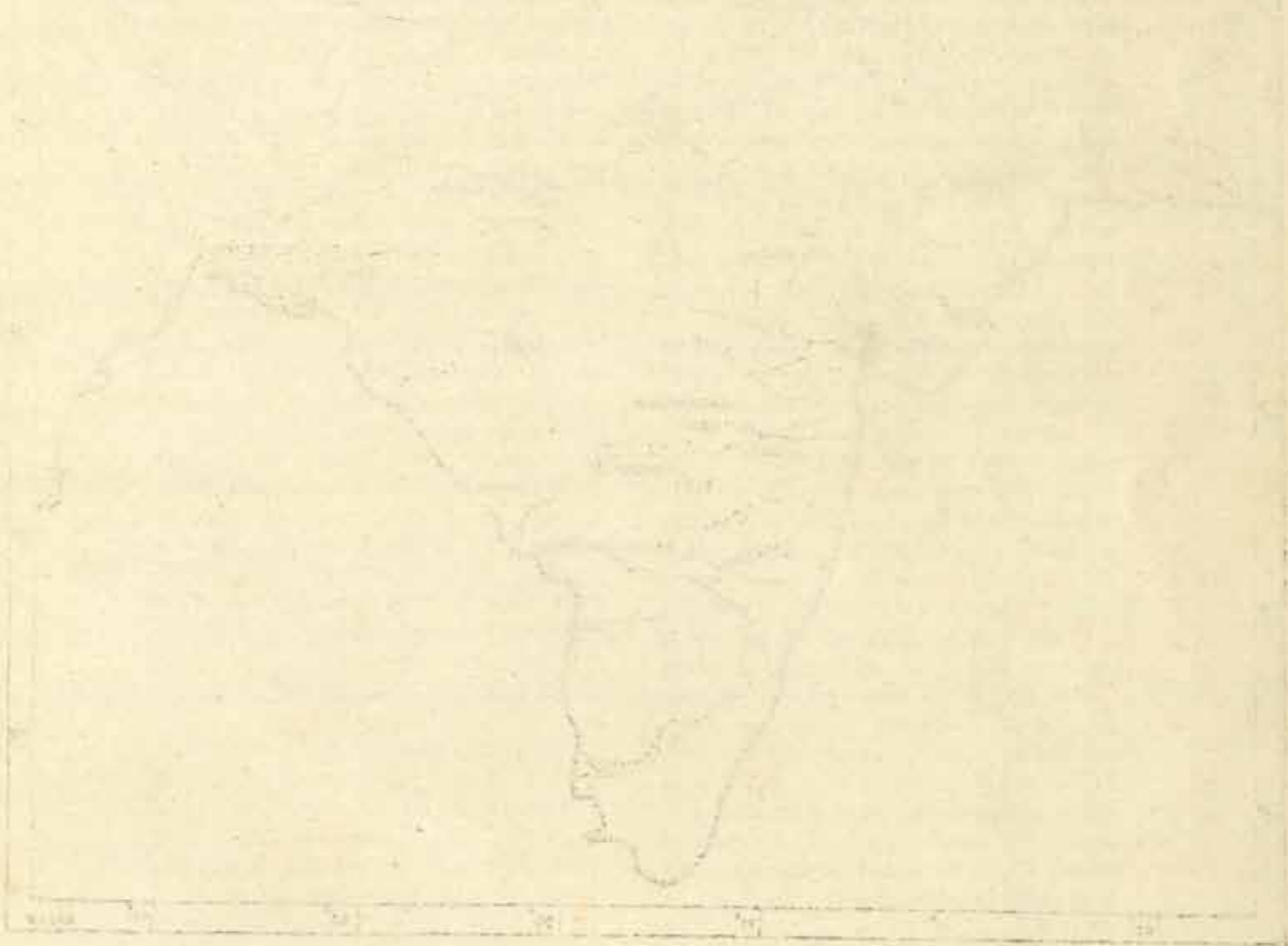
Another text, the *Naradiya Samhita*, of the same period, supplies us with very interesting information about the fashioning of the terracotta figurines.³ It prescribes that the clay required for figures should be collected from river banks and such other places, keeping in mind the special qualities of the clay. It should then be placed in a piece of cloth in some dry place and sieved through the cloth. It should be mixed with metal powder, sand, sugar, and finally with an adequate quantity of water. It should then be properly levigated by mixing vegetable matter with it. The text also gives further details regarding the preservation of the clay thus prepared and states that an armature (*shula-danda*) should be prepared on which to build up the image. It appears from the description in the text that the technique given is probably for making large images.

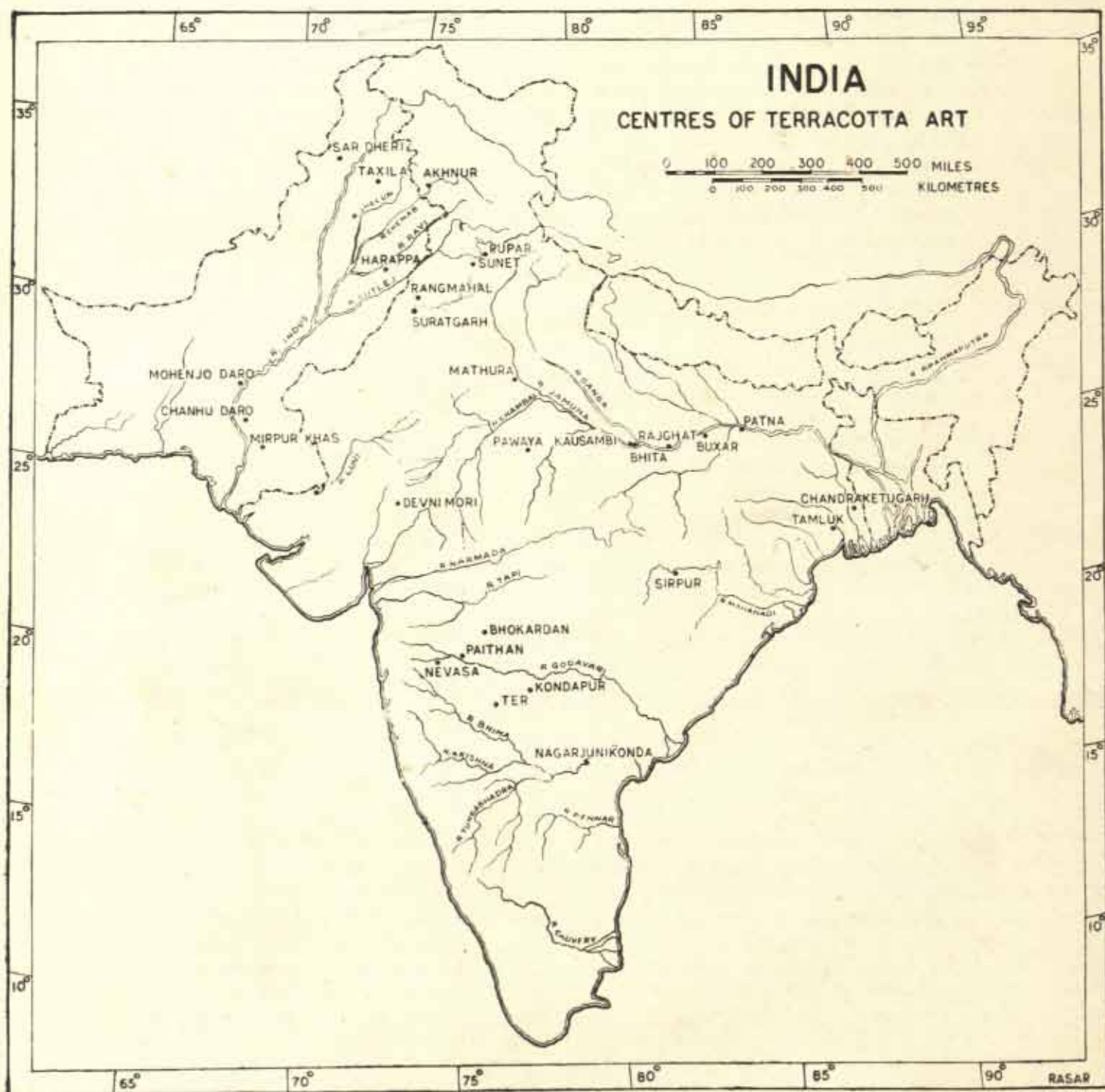
The *Kashyapa Samhita* (Ch. XII) further lays down that the toys should be well polished, handy, soft, straight, and easy to move from place to place, charming and sound-producing. Charaka, of the same

period, prescribes that they should be pleasant looking, have soft edges and should be such that they could not be easily put into the mouth or swallowed by a child.⁴ The list given at the end of the text includes a variety of dolls which are named after different relations, such as daughter, brother, sister, etc., obviously with a view to making the child familiar with the various relations in the family. The toys

thus also had an educative value.

The very fact that early texts refer to terracotta toys for children at such great length shows that they were manufactured on a considerably large scale. Further, the innumerable terracotta figurines that were produced in ancient India bear eloquent testimony not only to the skill of the potter-artist but also to the great care that was taken in making them.





2. The Benevolent Bull

THE EARLIEST TERRACOTTAS SO FAR DISCOVERED in India are those from the north-west regions of the sub-continent. They are the products of the earliest food-producing communities of Baluchistan, who had begun to settle there from the beginning of the fourth millennium B.C. and flourished for over a thousand years. They contributed to some extent to the make-up of the Indus civilization which came into existence in the early centuries of the third millennium B.C. These village communities on the frontier no doubt continued to survive even later and co-existed with the Harappans. They had mastered the technique of fashioning human (Fig. 1) and animal figurines, all hand-made, by the beginning of the third millennium. Of these, those of the Kulli and the Zhob cultures are more prolific than others. These communities were more or less contemporary but they do not seem to have influenced each other so far as their artistic creations are concerned. The Kulli peasants produced fine animal figurines, mostly of bulls, which are buff coloured and are painted with black stripes all over the body, with their eyes marked by painted circles. They are closely akin to the bulls painted on the Kulli pottery. It is significant that such painted bull figurines were found in large numbers in restricted areas in the excavations at Mehri, Kulli, and Shahi Tump. This would lead one to surmise that they were probably used as votive offerings in certain rituals. The bulls are rather small in size (about 5 to 10 cm or 2 to 4 in. in length), they have stumpy legs and a very prominent hump. Even though they display coarse treatment, the naturalistic modelling is evident. Some of them, however, might have

been used as toys, for they have a hole in each leg for yoking to a model cart. But much more interesting to the children must have been the bird whistles with a hole in the tail for blowing. Such whistles were common in the Indus cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-daro whence they were probably imported, or were locally made.

Terracotta female figurines are less abundant at these sites, but they are extremely interesting inasmuch as they form a class of their own. Many of them are broken below the waist, but those which are complete show that they had a pedestalled base. A very peculiar feature of these figures is that they are usually shown with arms akimbo or very rarely raised above to the breasts. They are also loaded with jewellery consisting of necklaces, usually three in number. In one case, the three short necklaces clinging close to the neck have three oval-shaped pendants which may probably be cowrie shells, while the longer ones reaching the waist have floral-shaped pendants. The figurines are also shown wearing bangles similar to the specimens of shell and clay from the sites of this culture. In one case, even armlets are visible on the left arm.

The women of prehistoric Baluchistan appear to have bestowed great attention to their hair as is evident from the details of hair dressing seen in the terracotta female figurines of the Kulli culture. The whole mass of hair was dressed into curly tresses on the front and secured at the back by a fillet above the forehead. The style very much resembles the *bhramaraka* fashion which was in vogue in the Gupta period in the fifth century A.D. At the back, the whole mass of hair was allowed to roll on the nape. On closer observation, it

Pl. 2B

Pls. 1, 2A



FIG. 1
Female figurine from Gomal Valley,
Pakistan, c. 3000 B.C. After *Ancient
Pakistan*, Vol. V, 1970-71.

looks like a head-dress not very different from that which was in vogue in the Sunga and the early Satavahana periods of the 2nd-1st century B.C. In a solitary specimen, the hair appears to have been braided into plaits, one on either side on the front; it is taken at the front over the shoulder and is seen dangling by the side of the breasts. These figurines, which have been identified as Mother Goddesses, wear conical ear ornaments which are similar to those found at Mohenjo-daro and are presently worn by the Rabaris and Mers of Saurashtra.

Although the potter-artist of the Kulli culture has taken great care in carving the details of the ornaments and hair dressing, he has not paid equal attention to the

modelling of the figure itself, which is extremely crude. There is no attempt at realistic representation of the face which has a pinched nose like a beak, and the eyes are shown by pierced pellets which are applied separately. The mouth is never shown and even the breasts are small, in sharp contrast to the nestling breasts of later figurines which emphasises the fertility aspect. In many cases, the small breasts are hidden by heavy necklaces. Sometimes a woman is shown holding two babies in her arms. This supports their identification as Mother Goddesses.

The Zhob bulls are not as plentiful as the Kulli ones, but typologically both are akin to each other. The Zhob bulls are of a sturdier build and their modelling displays an advanced naturalistic treatment though they are severely plain. Horse figurines have also been found which may be due to the presence of the animal in that region from quite an early time.

The Zhob female figurines show a certain development of technique. They all end below the waist in a pedestalled base, and have goblin-like faces on account of the owl-like nose and deep eye holes. Their full, rounded breasts with prominent nipples bespeak of their association with the fertility cult. Like the Kulli figurines, they also wear an elaborate head-dress and jewellery, all applied separately. Their gruesome features are suggestive of their being a terrific embodiment of the primitive Mother Goddess. They have their prototypes in Western Asia, more particularly in Iran from whence the inspiration probably came.

The terracotta figurines of the bull and the Mother Goddess are by far the earliest examples of the art of the village communities of the sub-continent. These frontiersmen of the hilly flanks of the north-western regions were the pioneering colonizers whose main concern was to produce enough food for subsistence and increase their cattle wealth. The fertility cult is thus symbolised by the powerful bull which was worshipped for its potency and brute

strength. The Mother Goddess was connected with the fertility cult; but she was not the beneficent Mother as she became later but was feared and had therefore to be propitiated. She was thus installed on a platform or an altar and offerings were made to her, and the bull figurines probably served as votive offerings. The bulls were decorated with colour stripes as is done today during *Pola*, the bull festival. Thus propitiated, she would, it was believed, drive away the demoniac forces of nature and bestow happiness on her devotees, her children, for she was the provider of all things. The bull and the Mother Goddess is a recurrent theme in the terracotta repertoire from prehistoric sites all over the Indian sub-continent.

Of the neolithic farmers in the country, only those from the southern Deccan appear to have used clay as a medium for their artistic expressions in the latter half of the third millennium B.C. With no previous experience of working in clay, it must indeed have been an exciting though difficult experience for these first farmers to give concrete shape to their ideas. We do not know much about their religion, but we can reasonably be certain that some

sort of a bull cult was in vogue in their pastoral society, for they have left behind many rock engravings and paintings which portray mostly bulls. The predominance of the bull can never be exaggerated in an agro-pastoral society. There is a remarkable stylistic similarity between some of the bulls in the engravings on granitic boulders and those of clay. Terracottas of bulls from such neolithic sites as Piklihal in Andhra Pradesh are extremely crude and betray very coarse modelling. They appear to represent the humped species with long horns, reminding one of those on the Indus seal stones, and some scholars are therefore of the opinion that they might have come from the Indus valley. The neolithic farmers may have adopted the Indus bull as is suggested, but the same cannot be said of the terracotta figurines, as there is a marked difference between the two.

The bird figurines from neolithic sites are obviously toys. They are shown with closed wings and are also very crude in their modelling. They are comparable with the Indus Valley bird figurines and they may also have come from the Indus Valley settlements.

3. Metropolitan Imagery

THE THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C. WITNESSED THE rise of the Indus civilization. It was thus far held that India's first civilization flourished from *circa* 2500 to 1750 B.C., but the recent evidence from excavations both in India and Pakistan shows that its beginnings can now be stretched back to about 3000 B.C. Although its stages of development from the Early Indus period into the full-fledged civilization are not yet clear, there should be little doubt that the first civilization of the sub-continent was among the earliest in the world and was also, in some respects, more advanced than some other early civilizations. The metropolitan centres of the Indus civilization were all located in Pakistan at the time of the partition of the country, but a systematic search by Indian archaeologists have brought to light many centres of this civilization in India too. Among them, the most noteworthy are Kalibangan in Rajasthan and Lothal in Gujarat, both of which have been scientifically excavated on a large scale in recent years.

In the third millennium B.C. we enter into almost a different world so far as the terracotta art is concerned. The Harappans, as the people of the Indus civilization are called in archaeological literature after the type site where the culture was first discovered, produced terracottas on an enormous scale. They were the people of the plains having settled in the rich alluvial tract of the Indus and its tributaries. As Sir Mortimer Wheeler has rightly observed, the Indus has given us our civilization and the Ganga, our faith. Many of the elements of our cultural pattern can be ultimately traced to the Indus civilization. But surprisingly enough, the Harappan artists do

not seem to have produced any stone sculpture worth the name; they were more adept in fashioning clay figurines which are very abundant at Harappan sites. In fact, the quality of the terracottas from the Indus cities leads one to surmise that it might have been a specialised profession of some artists rather than the potter turning out a few figurines in his spare time. It is difficult to agree with Earnest Mackay who suggested that some of the Harappan terracottas might have been the work of children.⁵ But he had himself thought earlier that it was probable that there were professional image-makers in the Indus cities as at present.⁶ In fact, some of the figurines are far too stylized to be classed as the specimens of ancient art; actually they compare favourable with the "modern" art pieces of the *avant garde* school of our own times.

The entire range of Harappan terracottas is broadly divisible into human and animal figurines, and although a few from each class are apparently connected with the religion of the Harappans, a vast number certainly were secular in nature—they were clearly toys for children. From the standpoint of technique, the Harappan artist should be credited with the invention of the mould. We do not know for certain whether this was a Harappan invention or if it was an import from Western Asia. The mould-made figurines, however, are few in number. A majority of the terracottas, as may be expected, are hand-made, while some, which are hollow within, were made on a core of straw or some such material which burnt out when the figurine was baked. The Harappan artists had thus

fully mastered the technique of making terracottas.

The main reason for the prolific production of terracottas in the metropolitan centres of the Indus civilization was the fine clay which is abundant in the rich alluvium of the Indus and its tributaries. The clay used for the terracottas was the same as that used for making pottery and it was tempered by adding fine particles of sand, chopped husk and sometimes even lime or mica or both, though not wholly necessary as there was no danger of the figurines being cracked or warped while drying. The clay figures were evenly baked either light or dark pink in the kiln at a fairly high temperature, and were sometimes treated with a slip or wash of this colour. Some of the figurines were also painted in red as some traces of the colour on them indicate. This practice of applying red colour to the terracottas was also current in the ancient Egyptian and the Babylonian cultures. It is pertinent to point out in this connection the latter day Indian practice of daubing ritual images with red lead; this is perhaps symbolic of the blood of the animal which was once sacrificed to them. The terracotta animal figurines, mostly of bulls, which served as votive offerings, thus become significant in the light of this custom.

Stylistically, the Indus figurines are related to those from Baluchistan. Although a majority of them are modelled by hand, certain physical features and decorative elements are indicated by incisions and the appliqué method. Thus, in the case of human figures, the eyes are represented by pellets of clay, usually oval in shape. The mouth too, is shown by an elongated pellet which, in its turn, is incised with a horizontal line to simulate lips. The ears are rarely shown; they are almost invariably covered by the elaborate head-dresses so common in these images. The nose is extremely prominent and is formed by pinching the clay. Arms have been preserved in many specimens. In the case of female figures, the right arm is brought up

between the breasts and is sometimes shown touching the mouth, while the left one is held across the lower part of the body. The legs of a vast majority of the figurines were broken very early and are missing. Some of the male figures are shown with a band round the neck and this has been referred to by one scholar as a sacred cord or the badge of office because it has been very clearly shown not only on figures from Mohenjo-daro but also on those from Chanhudaro. Many of the human figures are unfinished at the back; they were probably not meant to be seen from behind.

A considerably large number of human figures, more particularly of women, are shown wearing jewellery. Judging from the images, some sort of torque (*kanthi*), composed of large beads, was worn by men and women alike. Sometimes elaborate necklaces, each with a large pendant, were also worn. Bangles on the arms and wrists were quite common; they must have been clay or shell bangles which are common at the Indus sites. But far more interesting are anklets which are also seen, though rarely. Another characteristic ornament was the girdle, rather narrow and plain, but sometimes decorated with two or more medallions or a clasp. Sometimes a girdle composed of strings of beads was worn. Large barrel-shaped beads of carnelian, which are found in large numbers at Harappan sites, may have been used for making such girdles. The human figurines are very rarely shown wearing clothing of any kind; neither men nor women, except for a few examples, are depicted wearing any garment. However, the women are sometimes shown wearing a loin cloth or skirt.

The most distinctive feature of the female figures is their head-dress which is fan-shaped and very elaborate. It was held in position by a profusely ornamented forehead band. It is rather similar to the peacock-plume type of coiffure that was in vogue in the first century B.C. and its popularity did not diminish even in the Gupta period in the fifth century A.D., for

even Kalidasa, the greatest Sanskrit poet of the Golden Age, speaks of it appreciatively. The head-dress of the Harappan women, as seen in the figurines, had pannier-shaped attachments which are so common at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, but are conspicuously absent at Chanhudaro. This is perhaps indicative of local fashions in the different metropolitan centres of the Indus civilization. Some female figurines are shown wearing close-fitting caps with a long point which is seen dangling down on one side. The men, too, wore this type of cap sometimes.

The technique of fashioning these figurines is almost the same as that of the Kulli and Zhob images, the only difference being that the Harappan figurines do not have pedestalled bases. Moreover, a certain amount of freedom of movement is clearly discernible in them; they are not as stylized as their predecessors from the hilly regions of the north-west were. The Harappan women are shown in a variety of poses, such as kneading the dough or chaffing the grain, nursing the child, and so on. There are also some nude figures with arms either on or round the knees, joined in the front in devotion, and sometimes squatting on their haunches. Their abstract rendering would do credit to a sculptor of modern art.

The female figures can be broadly grouped into three distinct classes. Of these, the most noteworthy is the class of figures which has been identified as the Mother Goddess. They are fairly numerous and are characterised by broad hips and prominent breasts, and they are also adorned profusely with ornaments in appliqué. They are often shown standing and have applied eyes, pinched noses and slit mouths; their necklaces also are of applied clay and have many oval pendants. The goddess wears a girdle of three or four strands with a round clasp. The characteristic fan-shaped head-dress sometimes has pannier or cup-shaped attachments on either side of the face, identical to the

Cretan head-dresses. She is regarded as the manifestation of the great Mother Goddess who was quite common among the early farming communities of West Asia and some areas of Europe as well. That the figurine is connected with the Indus religion is indicated by the panniers which, in some cases, were used as lamps as the traces of black soot and oily patches show. And what is more, the Great Mother is sometimes shown holding a child to her breast or on her hip which is betoken of fertility. The worship of the Mother Goddess was no doubt widespread in the Indus empire. One must agree with Sir John Marshall, the excavator of Mohenjo-daro, who observed: "In no country in the world has the worship of the Divine Mother been from the time immemorial so deep rooted and ubiquitous as in India."¹

Another group of female figurines connected with the fertility cult are those of pregnant women. They were certainly not toys but must have served as votive offerings by barren women for procuring an offspring. Besides, there are a number of figurines with swollen bodies and grotesque features that look more like caricatures. They too have a fan-shaped head-dress and a pinched, beak-shaped nose and applied eyes. In some cases the nose resembles a boar's snout. These women, usually shown in a standing posture, appear pregnant because of their swollen bodies. The red colour, traces of which are visible on some of the female figurines, is supposed to be the symbol of fertility. This is corroborated by the discovery of a number of such figurines from the granary area at Harappa.

The human figurines of the Indus civilization are either grotesques or caricatures and hence the lack of realism and sense of proportion has to be explained. The Mother Goddess figurines, because of their pinched noses and the applied, goblin-like eyes, have a fearful appearance. It is highly likely that they were portrayed in this manner because they represented the de-

PL. 4

Pls. 6, 7

moniac forces of nature. And what is more, tradition also must have played an important role. The pre-Harappan Mother Goddess figures of the Zhob and the Kulli cultures are also characterised by such grotesque features. They are the earliest expressions of the religious ideas of the first farmers of the sub-continent; they depict the nature and form of the divinities which were conceived by them. The forces of nature, being destructive, had to be feared and consequently were propitiated and in course of time they were attributed the quality of benevolence. This shift from the malevolent to the benevolent character of the divinity is almost universal and in India it is best seen in Ganesha, an exalted cult god of the Hindu pantheon, who was first the creator of obstacles, but later became the remover of all obstacles.

There are some female figurines which can definitely be said to be without any religious significance. Among these is a woman kneading dough or winnowing grain; the woman in this case is shown seated and having in front of her a pan or dish in which is a quern. Similarly, the figurines in which the women are shown lying on a bed, must have been mere toys without any particular significance.

Terracotta figurines of the Mother Goddess have been found in large numbers at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro and other Indus cities in the Punjab and Sind, but they are extremely rare at Kalibangan (Rajasthan) and at Lothal (Gujarat) which perhaps indicates the absence of the Mother Goddess cult in Rajasthan and Gujarat in Harappan times. On the other hand, a few male figures have been found at these sites and we may not therefore be far off the mark if we infer that the Indus civilization population of Rajasthan and Gujarat worshipped a male deity.

As compared to female figurines, those of men are limited in number. A few male figures are shown with grotesque features like those of the female images already described. They may be connected with the

religion of the Harappans. A very interesting male figure is shown with a long nose and a receding chin and is therefore taken to represent a foreigner, possibly a Sumerian or someone from the Mediterranean region because of the Semitic features of his physiognomy.

The percentage of the male terracotta figures from Harappan sites is very small, but they are not as rare as in the pre-Harappan cultures of the hilly areas. However, we must remember that they are almost non-existent in the Kulli and the Zhob cultures. There are some exquisite figures, such as a man seated with his arms on or round his knees, and another squatting on his haunches and with the hands joined in front in an attitude of devotion. The figure of a standing male is very rare. These images are mostly nude but for a sash or girdle which is visible in a few cases. Some of the male figures have a short beard worn in the style of those days. These and other figures which perhaps illustrate some physical exercises have been taken to represent yogic postures.

Far more interesting are horned heads which are supposed to be masks. They are flattish and are made from a single mould. Some of them are of superior workmanship. They are characterised by oblique eyes, rather Mongoloid, and a horned head-dress. Their identification as masks is supported by the perforated ears, obviously to allow for fastening to the face. Figurines with horned head-dresses are also to be seen on some of the Indus seals, and they may therefore have been used in rituals or as charms. They might also have served as ornaments in a house or some other structure, on the walls or even the doors like the buckrania which were used for the same purpose in various parts of the Old World. Two such masks, with exactly identical features, have been found at Mohenjo-daro. They have a double Janus-like head, with a fan-shaped projection. The faces are obviously cast from a

PL 5

mould and joined together. In this case too the eyes are oblique. There is little doubt that this was an Indus divinity. Such animal masks from Mohenjo-daro are also known.

PL 8A

Of all the terracotta animals the bulls are rendered most faithfully and artistically. They constitute nearly three-fourths of the entire collection. The bull is of the short-horned and humpless variety at first and then of the typical Indian Brahmani humped species. The origin of the humped bull is still controversial, for opinions differ whether its origin is Indian or African; but there is evidence to show that in parts of West Asia and Egypt it occurs late, and it therefore appears that it is indigenous to India. Though the bull is so common in terracottas, it is curious that there is not a single representation of a cow. The bulls are rather coarsely made with simple round clay pellets for eyes, a pronounced hump, long thick horns projecting forwards, and the forelegs and the

hind legs joined together. It seems that at Mohenjo-daro, bulls with such block legs came mostly from the lower levels, whereas in the case of bulls from the upper levels, the legs are separate. Sometimes the bull is shown as if charging with his head lowered; it is adorned with a garland around the neck from which a bell is suspended. The dew-lap, which is typically Indian, is shown by ridges or by applying separate strips of clay. Some of the bulls are portrayed so realistically that they appear actually to exude power and vitality; one cannot but feel that this animal may have been worshipped for acquiring potency. In them one can easily recognise the naturalistic modelling reminiscent of the Kulli and Zhob bull figurines which also were used in rituals. The predominance of bulls leads one to surmise that there probably existed a bull cult in the Indus valley for, as Sir John Marshall states: "In prehistoric times the worship of the bull...was widely dis-

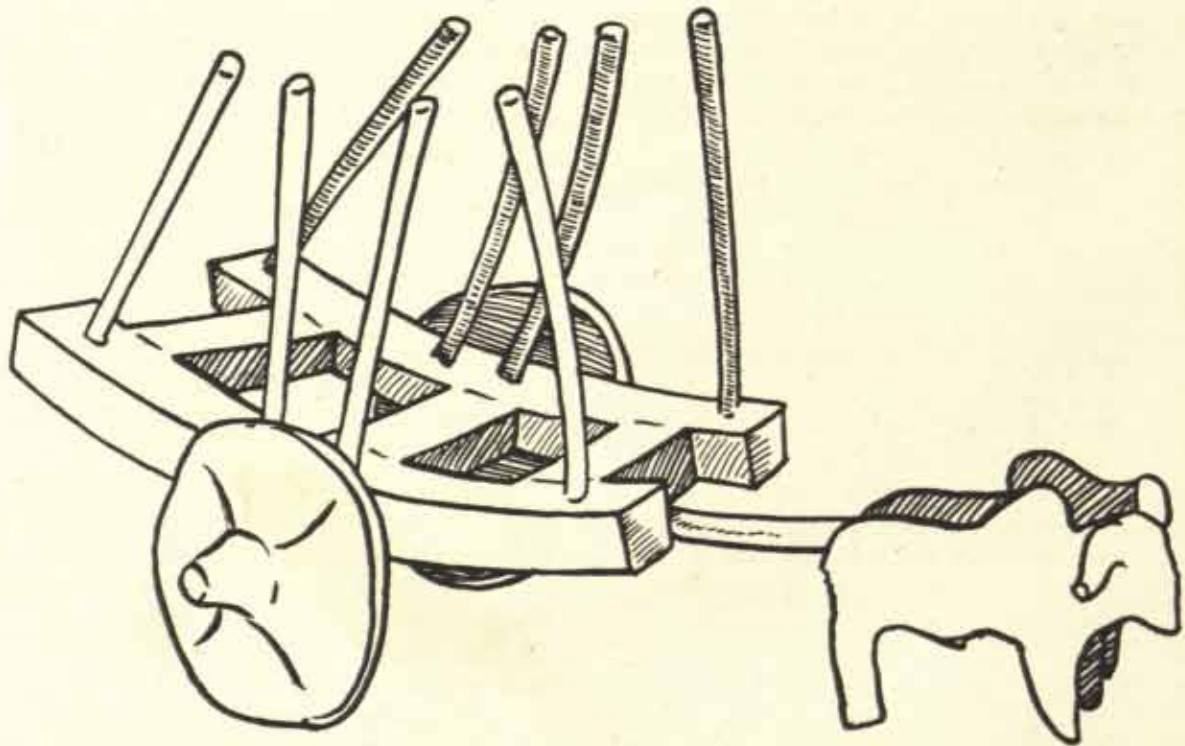


FIG. 2
Toy cart from Mohenjo-daro, c. 2000 B.C.

seminated throughout the near and middle east where he appeared sometimes as a beneficent guardian of a homestead, sometimes as a malevolent storm demon."⁸

One can easily recognise the bulls which were children's toys because they often have a moveable head that waggled with a string and with a zigzag perforation intended for sliding down a stick. Besides, there were also animals mounted on wheels, to be pulled along. The children also had carts to which the bulls could be yoked (Fig. 2). The small model carts with solid wheels are indeed characteristic of the Indus civilization.

A bewildering variety of animals from almost the entire animal world is represented in terracottas. The unicorn, a single-horned animal so common on Indus seals, is also present, though rare. Elephants have short legs and their trunks are much too short. A specimen from Chanhu-daro has vertical and horizontal lines over the body which perhaps represent trappings. Besides, there is a ring of red round the end of the trunk and a painted line down its front which doubtless

shows that the beast was dressed for festive occasions. A ram's fleece was sometimes indicated with red lines or nail marks, whereas the wrinkled hide of the rhinoceros was shown by additional strips of clay. A monkey was sometimes represented climbing a tree, with the hair on the monkey's body indicated by incised lines. Still less common are figurines of tiger, pig, goat, etc. The dog appears to be quite common because it was a pet animal. It was sometimes provided with a collar round the neck and fastened by a cord to a post, just as any dog might be today. One of the dogs from Mohenjo-daro is covered with red spots. Even a cat is present and it is supposed to be the first representative of the domestic cat. The animal which is noticeably absent is the horse, except for a solitary specimen from Lothal. The animal figures were usually made by hand but larger ones, which are hollow, must have been made on a stuffing of straw which was burnt away while baking. Some of the figures are definitely mould-made.

4. Merciful Mother

SOME TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, THE PERIOD between the end of the Indus Valley civilization and the early historical period beginning from the birth of the Buddha in the sixth century B.C., was rightly described as the "Dark Age" in Indian history. But now the picture has changed, for the work that has been done in the post-Independence period has brought to light a number of chalcolithic cultures in the western and central parts of India and the Deccan. These people were the pioneering colonizers who introduced a food-producing economy. They were no doubt adept at pot-making but we do not know much about their terracotta art in the absence of adequate evidence. Whatever has survived shows that the artistic standards were on the decline during this post-Harappan period. For the chalcolithic communities of Central and Western India, art was rather a luxury which they could not afford during the early stages of their struggle for survival. This is apparent from the evidence thus far unearthed from excavations of several sites in the sub-continent. The only ray of hope comes from western Malwa where the potter-artists of the Ahar and the Malwa cultures seem to have set a new trend in the terracotta art. The excavations at Kayatha (District Ujjain, M.P.) have brought to light a number of terracotta animal figurines of a singularly unique variety not so far reported from other sites. These terracottas can be assigned, on the basis of C-14 dating, to a period from *circa* 1700 to 1300 B.C.

The terracottas of this period comprise only animal figures among which the most predominant are bulls. They are divisible

into two distinct groups on stylistic grounds: naturalistic and stylized. They are all made of fine clay devoid of any impurities, and are baked at a uniformly high temperature. No figure is treated with slip of any kind, nor is there any attempt at painted ornamentation. The only decoration, if one can call it that, consists of nail marks over the body of the animal. This, though rare, recalls to the mind similar treatment on Harappan figurines. On several specimens we also notice the impressions of the hand that fashioned them. The delicate modelling is evidenced by the long, curved, pointed horns; the hump is most prominently fashioned and the mouth is pinched. There is no attempt at realistically representing the mouth or the eyes and the block legs remind us of the similar treatment noticed in the proto-historic terracottas.

Of the naturalistic rendering of the figurines, there is nothing especially noteworthy; it is, on the contrary, the stylized forms which deserve special attention. There are several varieties of the stylized forms. In a majority of cases a head with horns and a prominent hump are present, but the whole hind part is represented by a stem with a rounded end; sometimes this end is flat and thus must have served as a pedestalled base, probably for placing it on a platform during a ritual. The degree of stylization now reaches a new mark in the form which depicts a pair of short horns on a stemmed pedestal. Such horns at once remind us of the horn cult of the Minoans in ancient Greece, in whose palace at Knossos (Crete) we come across several representations of a pair of horns. This is only a family resemblance and be-

yond that no relationship can be hazarded.

The naturalistic and the stylized forms are found together and even among the latter, all the different varieties occur right from the beginning, thus precluding any attempt at tracing the evolution of different forms. The stylized bull forms are unique inasmuch as they have no parallels within the country and they therefore remain an enigma.

The terracotta art of the early farming communities of Central India and of the Deccan consists of animal figurines, mostly bulls, and female figures which are characterised by flat, crude modelling that is certainly primitive. They usually have stumpy legs and tapering hands; the facial features are mostly absent while the breasts are shown in appliqué. Sometimes such figures were applied to huge hand-made storage jars. This would associate them with the fertility cult and they can, therefore, be identified as Mother Goddesses. One such figure from Nevasa (Maharashtra) has a wide flaring base and short stumpy hands. Another from Bahal (Maharashtra) is quite flat and might have once adorned a jar. From Navda Toli (M.P.) also we have jars with applied female and animal figures. The tortoise on a jar from Prakash

PL. 9

(Maharashtra) is also interesting. But the most intriguing are the zoomorphic bottles from Nevasa and Chandoli in Maharashtra (Fig. 3).

The recent excavations at Inamgaon near Pune (Poona) have brought to light an entirely new class of clay figurines of males. They can be taken to be the handiwork of the Late Jorwe people who flourished there from circa 1000-700 B.C. These figurines are characterised by coarse modelling, stumpy legs and arms, and a flat body. A unique feature is that they are all unbaked in sharp contrast to the well baked Mother Goddess figurines. Very similar figures are even today made by villagers in the surrounding areas of Inamgaon on special occasions. They are prepared of wheat flour and are invoked for success in the celebrations. They are known as Ganesha. This is as it should be, because we begin all our work with prayers to Ganesha, the Remover of All Obstacles. Since the Inamgaon figurines were certainly meant only for occasional use, they were not baked.

Two extremely interesting female figurines have been reported from Inamgaon. The circumstances of their discovery demonstrates that they were definitely goddesses and were worshipped as such. They

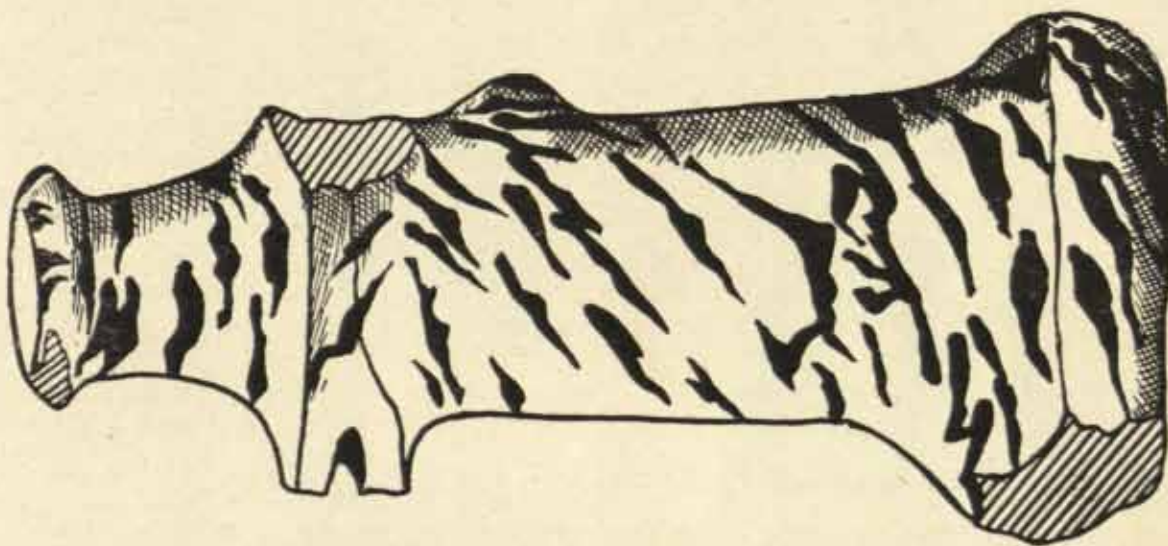


FIG. 3
A zoomorphic bottle from Chandoli, c. 1100 B.C.

were found buried in the floor of a house datable to *circa* 1300 B.C., and represent two Mother Goddesses, one with a head and the other without, a bull and a clay box. They are all unbaked. The figurine which was found inside the box has heavy breasts which are indicative of fertility. It may be noted that the clay box has been made exactly of the size of the figurine. Over the lid was found a crudely fashioned clay ring which obviously served as a stand for the goddess when it was worshipped.

Pl. 10

The other female figurine from Inamgaon is without a head. It is characterised by a flat body and short curved arms, but the portion below the waist does not seem to have been completed. The goddess has a blind hole and there is another such hole in the back of the bull which was found by her side over the box. When a stick is inserted in both the holes, the goddess sits perfectly over the bull. She thus appears to be the proto-Mahashvari of the historical period. She seems to be the prototype of the goddess Vishira of the

Mahabharata who may have been worshipped by the mothers of newly born babies whose necks are not strong enough during the first few months of life.

As already stated, the two goddesses, the one in the box and the other over it along with the bull, were found to have been very carefully buried in the hole which must have been specially dug for the purpose. Since the figurines are unbaked, their functions must have been of a temporary nature. It therefore appears that they were made for rites connected with the welfare of a child or children and ceremoniously buried later. Even today, in villages in Maharashtra, the water from the room of a woman who has recently given birth to a child is not drained out, but is channelled into a pit dug within the room itself. It is therefore not unlikely that the deities from Inamgaon were connected with childbirth and were buried in a corner of the room. Such deities have been referred to in the *Mahabharata* as the *Bala-grahas* (*Vana*, 230, 15).

5. Ageless Aditi

ABOUT THE BEGINNING OF THE FIRST MILLENNIUM B.C., India underwent a radical change in the cultural pattern on account of the introduction of iron, a superior metal for weaponry and the fast moving vehicle—the horse-chariot. The new iron age conquerors did not have any artistic inclinations; the few specimens of clay figurines that have survived in the Ganga valley from that time only testify to their poor artistic taste. Whatever remains is also indicative not of the creative power of the new people but only of the feeble survival of an earlier tradition. The degeneration of the artistic standards is in all probability due to the prevailing unsettled conditions and it took a long time for a revival of the terracotta art. When congenial conditions obtained once again, we witness the first attempts of the artist of the early historic period beginning from the sixth century B.C. He has produced something which shows no previous experience, but at the same time he cannot be said to have been far removed artistically from his proto-historic predecessors. The early terracottas have rightly been styled the "Timeless" types.⁹ They are all modelled by hand and represent a Mother Goddess (Fig. 4).

The early historical terracottas comprise human and animal figures which have come to us mostly from sites, such as Patna and Buxar in Bihar and Mathura and Kausambi in U.P. The human figure, with the entire volume more or less flattened, has horizontal hands which look stumpy. Typologically, they are closely related to the proto-historic Mother Goddess figures. The parallel is no doubt significant and is indicative of a

persistent tradition. Such figures are reported to have been found in large numbers at Kausambi and Bhita in U.P. The figures from Patna are more articulate for they possess limbs and facial features too. The nose is pinched and the eyes are indicated by circlets. The arms are either held in front or akimbo; the breasts and the navel are marked by circles and there are incised lines on the neck, the waist and the legs. Their curious fan-shaped head-dress and the block leg treatment are reminiscent of the Harappan tradition.

Related to this group are a number of archaic figures from Mathura and its environs, but their dating is as yet controversial because they have rarely been found in well-stratified deposits in excavations, most of them coming from surface collections. But scholars generally agree in their identification as a Mother Goddess who has been variously named as Aditi, Prithvi, and so on, which are names of the

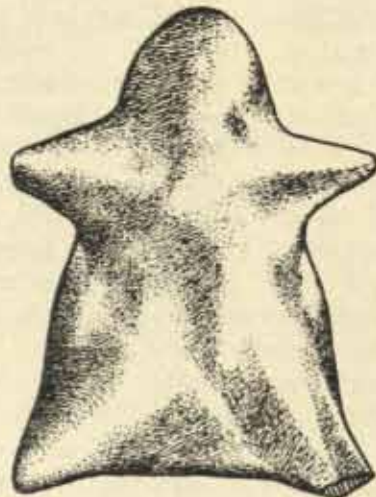


FIG. 4
Female figurine from Buxar, Bihar,
c. 4th, century B.C.

Mother Earth. They are perhaps connected with the magical rites which were performed to preserve the fertility of the soil. Women were associated with these rituals, because their child-bearing potentiality was comparable to the food producing capacity of the Mother Earth. Besides, in matriarchal societies, which are supposed to have existed in India in ancient times, the woman being the head of the family, reigned supreme. Perhaps, women were responsible in creating the Mother Goddess idiom. In Vedic literature, a woman is often compared to the field, and this symbolism became significant in Aryan society.

Pls. 11-14

The figures of the Mother Goddess from Mathura are characterised by certain stylistic features. They are all modelled by hand and no mould of any kind seems to have been used in fashioning them. The face usually looks like that of a bird on account of the beak-like nose or like that of an animal. The eyes, which are not symmetrical, are incised; they are either lozenge-shaped or semi-circular in outline and the hair is indicated by incised lines. The ornaments and some parts of the body are sometimes applied separately. They usually have prominent breasts, but in a few specimens, they are just indicated. The nipples are pointed and have a small hole in them. The figures are marked by broad hips and a slender waist over which the girdle is indicated by circular punch marks or by incised lines. The navel is shown by a small hole. The arms are spread out horizontally and the legs curved in an arch. Although the figures are depicted nude, the sex organs are not indicated. Some of the figures of the Mother Goddess usually have circular punch marks all over the body.

Pl. 16

Many ancient sites in Bihar have yielded a fairly good number of some curious terracotta plaques depicting a naga head with a human body. They have applied pellets for eyes and horizontal lines simulate the body. Below the head in a nar-



FIG. 5
A "Baroque lady" from Sar-Dheri,
Pakistan, c. 300 B. C.

row waist while the hips are inordinately voluminous. All this shows that they are distinctly female types. They sometimes have a perforation at the top for hanging. They may represent the snake-goddess Manasa. This association of the female with the serpent element is indeed interesting. It may be recalled in this connection that in Maharashtra barren women worship *nagas* or cobras on Naga Panchami day (in September) every year at Shirale in Sangali District. The terracotta *nagas* may also have been similarly worshipped for the same purpose of obtaining progeny.

The foregoing discussion makes it very clear that we must obtain more and more reliable data, particularly stratigraphical, from excavations so that we can place the different phases of the terracotta art of India on a firmer chronological footing. This is further corroborated by the evidence

from the excavations at Charsada (ancient Pushkaravati), a metropolis on the north-western border, where a fair number of terracotta figurines, known as the "Baroque ladies", were found in closely sealed deposits (Fig. 5). They form a distinctive group of figures which have long been known to characterise the frontier region. They were apparently produced in large quantities and are confined to the west of the Indus; only two or three were found at Taxila which is 80 km east of the river. They are about 15 cm in height and are made of fine clay, and have a prominent pinched nose and appliqué eyes. The breasts are small and were apparently separately attached, but the navel is not indicated. The arms look like pointed stumps, while the tapering legs are separated only by an incised line. They are

adorned with sparse jewellery and their head-dress, consisting of rosettes, resembles a tiara. Another conspicuous ornament is the cross-bands (*chhannavira*) on the chest. A very characteristic feature of these "ladies" is that they are steatopygous (*prithu-shroni*). They were assigned, in the absence of any concrete datable evidence, to different periods from the third millennium B.C. to the first century A.D. and were thus hanging in a chronological vacuum. But the stratigraphical evidence from the Charsada excavations shows that they belong to the third century B.C., though they may even be of an earlier date. These figurines continued to be made for more than a century but totally went out of vogue in the latter half of the second century B.C. ✓

6. Mannequins of Magadha

THE LAST QUARTER OF THE FOURTH CENTURY B.C. witnessed the rise of the Magadha empire in Bihar under the unified rule of Chandragupta Maurya, which later expanded under Emperor Asoka (273-236 B.C.). Alexander the Great invaded India in 326 B.C., but he could not carry his campaign to a successful conclusion and had to return. But a far reaching impact of the Macedonian invasion was that India came in close contact with the Western world which at that time in the fourth century was dominated by Hellenistic culture. Increase in communications between India and the West resulted in the introduction of many classical elements in the pattern of Indian culture. There is considerable truth in the statement of Vincent Smith, a renowned historian, that "Whatever Hellenistic elements in the Indian civilization can be detected, were all indirect consequences of Alexander's invasion."

The Mauryan period (322-187 B.C.) is marked by a sudden spurt in artistic activity in the country and the terracotta art also made rapid strides. Some of the primitive types of the previous age almost vanish and an entirely new class of figures appears. They are unique not only because of their size but also on account of their remarkable stylistic traits in respect of physiognomy and expression. A number of Mauryan figures have come from the capital city of Pataliputra (modern Patna) and its environs and from many other centres in the empire among which the most noteworthy are Buxar in Bihar and Mathura and Kausambi in U.P. A note of caution, however, must be added in connection with the dynastic affiliation of

the terracottas. There are several types of figures which may be of the pre-Mauryan age and may have continued to survive during the Mauryan epoch also, and others may be late Mauryan or on the Maurya-Sunga boundary in the second century B.C. But there are certain characteristic features of the terracottas of the fourth to second centuries B.C. and since the Imperial Mauryas were ruling during this period, we can conveniently describe them as Mauryan terracottas. A good number of these figurines may, however, be said to belong to the Mauryan period because they were recovered from the Mauryan levels in the course of excavations at Patna, more especially in the suburb of Kumrahar, the site where the Mauryan palace once stood, and Bulandi Bagh, where the fortifications of the city were laid bare. Since figurines stylistically similar to those from Patna have also been found in other parts of the Mauryan empire, it has become possible to assign them to the Mauryan period.

The most important centre of the terracotta art of the Mauryan period was at Patna itself, in the area which is now a suburb known as Bulandi Bagh. It probably marks the limits of the ancient capital because the excavations in this area have revealed the remains of the Mauryan fortifications which have been referred to by Megasthenes, the Greek ambassador to the court of Chandragupta Maurya. The terracottas found in this part of the city, though not numerous, are most remarkable because they are entirely of a different character. They are quite large in size and are characterised by smooth and sensitive modelling. They mostly represent dancing

girls and boys and each of them depicts a complete figure in the round. Their faces are delicately modelled and charming and it is certain that they were pressed from moulds, the remaining parts of the body being modelled by hand; both parts were then evidently joined together before firing. Each figure is quite tall and not stout and stumpy as the earlier terracottas were, and each stands on a small pedestal. The figure is usually of slender proportions but the modelling of the legs sometimes appears to be somewhat inartistic. The distinguishing mark of the figures is their delicately carved features. The females often wear a fluttering skirt while the breasts are shown bare. The uplifted edges of the skirt indicate the swinging motion of the body, and this as well as their costume suggest that they are dancing girls. Some of them have secured the whole mass of hair in a piece of cloth or kerchief recalling the *sakkos* of the Greek women, but some others wear a very elaborate head-dress set with large discs at places, or a bicornate head-dress. Round the neck, the dancers have a broad collar, the like of which has been found in the excavations at Taxila, a provincial capital of the Mauryan empire where Asoka was once a governor. The dancers also wear heavy ear-studs and broad girdles composed of beaded strands which hold the skirt in position. The figurines look almost like mannequins and the whole effect is one of elegance and sophistication.

The figures of the boys also display delicate and sensitive modelling. Their plump, cherub faces with a radiant expression and parted lips lend them a smiling innocence. The plastic quality of these images is superb. According to Dr. Ananda Coomaraswamy, one of the greatest authorities on Indian art, this is "one of the most sensitive and skilful productions in Indian art of any period."¹⁰

The clay figures from Bulandi Bagh are indeed unique and are undoubtedly the products of the most skilful artists. The

circumstances of their discovery point to their being made by one or a very few artists because they were found only in a restricted area. It is likely that we have here the handiwork of a Greek (*yavana*) sculptor whose atelier was perhaps discovered in the course of the excavations. The figures of the boys and girls also look somewhat un-Indian. Most classical writers have recorded that among the imports into India from the classical world were dancing girls and singing boys for the courts of Indian princes. The women sometimes also acted as bodyguards of kings as Sanskrit plays tell us.

The Bulandi Bagh figures stand out among the Indian terracottas by their sheer size and exquisitely carved features which are so finely executed that the figures can be better termed as clay sculpture. They are indeed remarkable for smooth modelling and their luminous bodies. This certainly is a spectacular phenomenon in the evolution of Indian terracotta art, particularly after the inarticulate "Timeless" types of the pre-Maurya period. It is therefore very likely that the Mauryan terracottas, more especially those from the Bulandi Bagh area, represent the court art as was the case with the Mauryan stone sculpture. It is not unlikely that the foreign artists who found work in the Imperial Mauryan court also tried their hand at modelling in clay. Like Mauryan stone sculpture they have not left any traditions behind them; the Sunga terracottas of the succeeding period appear more to be specimens of folk art and one must agree with Professor Nihar Ranjan Ray that the Mauryan art "was a hothouse plant reared by the will, care and patronage of the court heavily under the contemporary international culture and ideology of the Asiatic West and Mediterranean East. In the course of time, glass walls fell to pieces and the plant withered. Mauryan art failed to make any permanent contribution to the growth of Indian art..."¹¹

A very important centre of Mauryan ter-

Pl. 18

racottas was located at Buxar in Bihar. Numerous figures assignable to the Mauryan period have turned up from time to time at this imposing ancient site on the Ganga, but there is nothing that can remotely be compared with the Bulandi Bagh pieces. Here too the faces are mould-made whereas the body was hand-made and both were then joined together. A majority of the figurines appear to have been cast from the same mould. Most of them are of women while those of males are extremely rare. The most noteworthy feature of the Buxar figurines is the enormous headgear they wear, which in several cases looks more like a turban. It was separately made up of thin strips of clay that in their turn were decorated with some indistinct pattern to simulate the brocaded margin. The headgear is somewhat triangular in form and in some cases also has horns laterally. However, some of the figurines are without such a headgear; instead they have three vertical holes in the head obviously for flowers or some other type of head-dress which was separately attached. They sometimes have a cup-shaped ear ornament impressed with a lotus design. All the Mauryan figures, male and female, wear elaborate head-dresses. Does this in any way suggest that the people — the courtiers and other officials and the women of rank — were enjoined to wear it as a matter of convention of the Imperial court? We know that in the erstwhile princely state of Mysore (now Karnataka), men in the service of the king had to wear a brocaded turban in a most elegant fashion.

Another variety of figurines from Buxar are severely plain; they do not wear any head-dress or jewellery. Again, their faces are not moulded but are hand-made, and so also is the body. The nose is pinched, and the eyes are indicated by incised lozenges while the nose and the mouth are punctured. These figures are obviously representative of common people or even farmers as against the courtiers with bejewelled and brocaded turbans. The model-

ling of the face is delicately executed. All the figurines are finely baked, and some of them also have a red slip applied to them.

An important class of Mauryan figurines is that from Mathura which, though not the capital city, was nevertheless a great centre of art and trade located as it was on the arterial routes connecting Pataliputra (Patna) to Taxila and the great Grand Trunk road which joined north and south. The Mathura figurines of the Mauryan period are almost always dark greyish in colour and are treated in several cases with a black slip which, however, is crude in application. The figurines are made of fine clay which is free from impurities, and were in all likelihood baked in the kiln along with the characteristic Mauryan pottery which has been labelled by archaeologists as the Northern Black Polished ware (generally referred to as N.B.P. ware in archaeological literature) and which has a greyish core and bears a fine slip having a mirror-like polish. However, the slip on the pottery in some cases is crude and very closely resembles that on the terracotta figurines of the period. The pottery, however, is datable to *circa* 500-200 B.C. and it is therefore quite likely that some of the figures are contemporaneous with it.

Pl. 11

The most remarkable figure of the Mathura class is that of a Mother Goddess who is very closely related, at least stylistically, to that of the earlier period. The main difference is in the technique: the Mother Goddess figurines of the earlier period were all hand-made whereas it is now made in two parts; the head is pressed out from a mould while the body is modelled by hand. The face is somewhat oval and the eyes, which are rendered elliptical, are indicated by an outline in relief and hence they look like spectacles. No eyebrows are shown. The figurines are depicted wearing very elaborate head-dresses consisting of a number of rosettes bearing stamped patterns. Although the head is moulded in this Mathura class, the wig-like head-dress has been applied. The breasts are heavy and, together

Pls. 12, 13

with the inordinately broad hips, emphasize the fertility aspect of the Great Mother. Round the neck is a broad collar (*kanthi*) and a longish necklace dangles over the breasts, reaching the navel where its ring pendant is shown resting; and on either side are what look like fluttering streamers. Over the hips is seen a broad girdle (*mekhala*) composed of a number of round bosses bearing a stamped beaded pattern in relief. The girdle, being broad, completely covers the genital region. The legs are always short and stumpy and the hands, which are missing in a number of specimens, were probably curved.

The Mother Goddess type from Mathura is very closely akin to the earlier one; the only difference between the two is the beak-shaped or a snout-like nose, the outsize spiral (*sarpa-kundala*) in the ear and the absence of the large elaborate head-dress in the latter. The Mauryan Mother Goddess wears large discs (*tatanka-chakra*) in the ears; actually such ornaments of polished stones have been found in Mauryan levels at certain sites in the Ganga valley. They were covered with gold foil and impressed with repoussé patterns. But for these, both types of figures are stylistically similar, and so also is their modelling. The Mauryan specimens thus mark a stage in the development of the plastic representation of the Mother Goddess; the idol now becomes more naturalistic and human. She is no more the fierce, malevolent spirit but the Merciful Mother, out to protect her children and bestow happiness and prosperity upon them.

The change in the representation of the Mother Goddess from the bird-faced and animal-faced to the human one is indeed remarkable. Roundels of applied clay, sometimes resembling rosettes, are seen in the earlier Mother Goddess figurines; but their number increases when the head-dress becomes elaborate. This head-dress is the characteristic feature of the Mauryan female figures and it is highly likely that it was of Hellenistic inspiration, as such

elaborate head-dresses are also characteristic of the terracotta figures of Hellenistic Greece of the fourth and third centuries B.C. The Greek influence can be clearly perceived especially in the images from Bulandi Bagh as stated before.

The naturalistic modelling of the human face in many examples is enough to convince us that it was pressed out of a mould. This is an important technological advance which makes it possible for the potter-artist to produce terracottas on a mass scale. The specimens of the "Timeless" types, crude and inarticulate, are numerically far less though easy to fashion; but with the introduction of the mould, the figurines came to be made in large numbers. This is amply borne out by the finds of such figurines at several sites in North India. Though the face was moulded, the body was hand-made. The head was provided with a tapering tenon which was fitted into the body portion. The Graeco-Bactrian artist, who was quite active in the capital city of Pataliputra owing to royal patronage, used moulds for the faces of his figurines and the Indian potter-artist appears to have copied his technique.

The toy animals of the Mauryan epoch are often characterised by a thick black slip, sometimes with a crude burnishing. They seem to have been made along with the typical Northern Black Polished ware and the black slipped pottery of the Mauryan period and baked in the same kiln. The figures also sometimes bear incised circlets on the body. Similar decoration is also noticed on the contemporary human figures. It is either a circle or a circle-with-dot, the latter being known as the "eye" motif which was commonly employed in ancient times to ward off the "evil eye."

Mathura has also yielded a special class of terracotta heads in which the facial features present foreign ethnic affinities. The head-dress here is usually of the bicornate type but sometimes we also come across a foreigner with a conical headgear.

Pls. 25, 26

Pls. 26A, B

The faces undoubtedly were pressed out from a mould while the body, which is missing in a majority of cases, was modelled by hand, rather crudely. The beard is shown by indentation marks on the chin. They are probably supposed to represent Iranians.

There are two male heads known from Basarh. Not only is their head-dress foreign, but the physiognomy and the expression as also the smooth and delicate modelling very clearly indicate the Perso-Hellenistic

influence. The Western Asiatic influence is discernible in the winged female figures from Basarh. The very same affinity is also noticed in the court art of the Imperial Mauryas. According to some scholars the invasion of Pataliputra by Eukratides may have been instrumental in refreshing the knowledge of the Greek art of the Pataliputra artists. This, however, took place later. The foreign influence infiltrated in the earlier phase under Chandragupta for reasons well known to history.

7. Dampatis and Mithunas

THE SUCCESSORS OF ASOKA WERE WEAK and consequently the Mauryan empire crumbled to pieces not long after his death. The downfall was in no small measure due to internal dissensions and foreign invasions, but the final blow was given by the revolt of the Imperial army led by an able commander, Pushyamitra Sunga, in 187 B.C. The Sungas were staunch Hindus; they revived the Vedic institution of sacrifice. Some of the earliest Hindu temples were built during the Sunga period, but art evidence demonstrates that they practised religious eclecticism. The magnificent stupas at Bharhut and Sanchi in central India were embellished in a befitting manner when the Sungas were ruling.

There is a world of difference in the Mauryan art and that of the Sungas. The latter is truly Indian with its roots firmly embedded in Indian soil and without any signs of foreign influence whatsoever. There does not appear to be any relationship between the Mauryan and the Sunga art; the former died a natural death without leaving any traces. This, however, holds good so far as stone sculpture is concerned, but in case of terracottas, there appears to be some relationship between the two. This is as it should be, because the terracotta art is primarily the art of the people.

The Sunga terracottas are found all over the northern, eastern and central regions of India, for these were the constituent parts of the Sunga empire. There was now a sudden increase in the manufacture of terracottas because of an important change in the technique of production. We have already seen that in the preceding period a mould was used for producing heads

which were then joined to the bodies by hand. The next logical development of this technique obviously was the use of a mould for the entire figure. Consequently, completely moulded plaques take the place of modelled figures, but naturally not to their exclusion. The plaques were produced from a single mould, and are therefore flat at the back. They were also provided with a hole at the top for hanging on the wall. In the beginning the known examples show flattened forms but later, in course of time, the Sunga artist appears to have been successful in producing fine pieces modelled in bold relief and displaying refined, sensitive modelling. With experience, the artist was able to regulate contours and consequently the linear rhythm also becomes more disciplined. Stylistically, the Sunga terracottas are exact parallels of the stone sculpture of the period. From now on, there is a close correspondence between the stone sculpture and the terracotta art of the period and this continued for centuries through the history of Indian art.

Among the centres of the Sunga terracottas, the most important are Kausambi near Allahabad, Rajghat near Varanasi (Banaras), Bhita and Mathura (all in U.P.) and Tamluk, the ancient port town of Tamralipti in Bengal. It is very likely that terracotta figurines were manufactured at these and other centres in the Sunga empire and then exported to other areas. A few moulds of this period have been found and figurines made from the same mould have turned up in distant localities. Thus an exquisite image of a winged goddess that was found at Vaishali in Bihar seems to have been made from a mould

which was discovered at Tamluk in Bengal and is now preserved in the Ashutosh Museum in Calcutta. Of course, it has to be conceded that very similar moulds could have been prepared by artists and were then exported to other regions, but it is highly improbable that different artists in different areas could have carved out exactly identical moulds.

The Sunga terracottas are of extremely fine fabric and are uniformly baked light red or orange though some of them do have a red slip. The plaques depict several subjects which are usually secular in nature. They often portray young and beautiful women in the full bloom of their youth, engaged in toilet, and music and dance. They are buxom, almost voluptuous, and always have a large and elaborate head-dress which forms the only stylistic link between the Sunga and the Maurya terracottas. The head-dress is extremely heavy, having a number of beaded bands which perhaps simulate jewelled strips similar to those referred to by Kalidasa. The figures are almost always loaded with jewellery which is in keeping with the Indian woman's weakness for personal adornment. They have outsize studs or discs in their ears which are similar to those found in early historical levels in the excavations of north Indian sites. They also wear elaborate necklaces (*ratna-haras*), composed of multiple bead strings or torques (*kanthi*); some of the necklaces are composed of eight auspicious emblems (*ashta-mangalaka-hara*), such as the *swastika*, the goad (*ankusha*), a pair of fish, etc. These auspicious emblems are sometimes seen in their head-dresses as well. Besides, they have on their person heavy bangles, anklets, and broad, bejewelled girdles. There is no doubt that this heavy jewellery conceals, to some extent, the loveliness of the delicately modelled body. Several such plaques of great beauty have come down to us from Kausambi in U.P., including a limited group with erotic motifs.

Pls. 27-30

A striking feature of the Sunga female figures is their nudity. The women are no doubt sometimes shown wearing a lower garment which is wound round the loins, and its pleats, gathered at the front, are taken at the back and tucked in. But this garment is made to appear so transparent that the sex organs can be distinctly seen through it. In a number of cases, the females are almost nude, with the pudenda prominently depicted. This, coupled with the heavy nestling breasts and broad hips and a narrow waist, render the feminine form most alluring. This depiction of the genitals in sharp contrast to the total absence of nudity in the Mauryan period is worthy of note. We must agree with Coomarswamy who avers: "Such forms are by no means peculiar to India, but is a remarkable illustration of the continuity of Indian culture that the old and spontaneous conception of fruitfulness and beauty as inseparable qualities has survived throughout the later artistic evolutions where it explains and therefore justifies the expansive and voluptuous warmth of the characteristically feminine types of Indian literature and sculpture."²²

Pl. 28

The commonest motif in the Sunga terracottas is the *dampati* (husband and wife) and the *mithuna* (amorous couples) which have been found in large numbers from several sites in north India. In the former, only the husband and wife are shown standing or sitting. They appear to be respectable citizens and represent the very picture of conjugal bliss. In a number of specimens it is observed that the persons are shown nude with their sexual organs clearly marked, and what is more, the pudenda of the female is modelled very prominently. The male and female both share the characteristic features of the Sunga terracottas, that is, the woman wears an extremely elaborate head-dress and is loaded with jewellery, while the male has a turban wound round his head in which is gathered the mass of hair

Pl. 31

in a round ball-like protrusion on the forehead. He wears a *dhoti* which is depicted as of a very diaphanous material. It is not possible to know the exact purpose of these plaques. Although they were certainly intended for adorning the walls of the house, it is difficult to assign any religious significance to them, though they might have been connected with the fertility cult. Dr. V. S. Agrawala, a renowned authority on Indian art, observes: "At best they seem to be related to the ideal man and woman figures represented at Sanchi as forming part of the repertoire of the idyllic land of Uttarakuru where *mithuna* pairs endowed with eternal youth and beauty are born from the wish-fulfilling tree."¹⁸

Evidence from excavations shows that these husband and wife (*dampati*) plaques appear in the levels ascribable to *circa* 200-100 B.C., whereas the *mithunas* or the amorous couples come later from *circa* 100 B.C. to A.D. 100 levels. The latter often portray amorous couples in various postures from mere dalliance to sexual union; they are found kissing, embracing, and touching the genital parts of each other, thus representing the down-to-earth types of people. The plaques have decorative borders and the background is stamped with floral and rosette patterns and spirals and lozenges. The figures are delicately modelled and reflect the loving care and skill with which the artist modelled them. Even technically their moulds are better made; they have straight edges in utter contrast to the irregular borders of the *dampati* plaques. The dress and ornaments of the persons in the *mithuna* plaques are however identical with those in the *dampati* ones.

The *mithuna* plaques have also been found in good numbers from sites in the Ganga valley. The question then that naturally arises is: what was their function? Their very character shows that they were not toys for children and were obviously not intended for sex education. Although

the plaques are of exquisite beauty, no sane person, least of all an Indian, would hang them on the walls of his house where the children in the family could see them any time. They actually remind us of the erotic sculptures which adorn mediaeval temples, such as those at Khajuraho in Central India, and we may therefore not be far off the mark if we assign some religious significance to them. It should be noted that in every Hindu ritual, both husband and wife play an equally important role. In fact, the only way in which we can find a satisfactory solution is to ascertain the findspot of the terracottas and the associations in which they are found. But the earlier excavators, unfortunately failed to record this vital information and therefore whatever opinion we hazard is bound to remain hypothetical. Be that as it may, the *mithuna* plaques were perhaps connected with the fertility cult, for even the *Satapatha Brahmana* explains a *mithuna* as a "productive couple."

The terracottas with definite religious affiliations are those of Gajalakshmi and another goddess who has been identified as Vasudhara. Gajalakshmi, the goddess of wealth, is shown standing on a lotus and being bathed by two elephants flanking her. This is perhaps the first identifiable plastic representation of this divinity. Sometimes, we also come across representations of goddess Sri, the Hindu goddess of beauty. She is depicted on a plaque which is famous as the "Oxford terracotta". It was supposed to have come from Kausambi near Allahabad, but is probably from Tamluk in Bengal. This plaque is one of the finest specimens of not only the terracotta art but also in the entire range of Indian plastic art on account of the delicately modelled features, the expression of supreme bliss on the face, and the wealth of detail of the head-dress and jewellery which have been carved so minutely. In fact, they remind us of the tracery in Indian ivories, and as in the case of the famous Sanchi gateway (*torana*)

Pl. 32

Pl. 27

which was carved by a guild of ivory carvers (*dantakarah*) of Vidisha in Central India, this terracotta image must also have been the handiwork of a highly skilled ivory carver. For sheer wealth of detail of the ornamentation, it has no parallel in Indian terracottas. A very similar plaque was found at Tamluk and it is therefore likely that the Oxford specimen also originally came from the same place.

Another divinity that is depicted in the Sunga terracottas is a goddess who is shown standing and wearing as usual a heavy head-dress and jewellery which was the custom of the times. But what strikes us most is the transparent drapery through which the sex organ is clearly seen. Perhaps we will never be able to explain this weakness of the Indian artist for revealing the sexual parts of the female figures, and that too so prominently. The nudity becomes more enigmatic in the case of the figures of divinities. We do not know whether the artist is here trying to show off his skill in modelling the diaphanous garment. In the present case, however, the nudity is understandable because the artist was carving the figure of the goddess who has been identified as Vasudhara or Vasudha (Fig. 6), which is yet another name of the goddess Earth, and one can therefore easily recognise the association of the divinity with the fertility cult.¹⁴ One specimen in the Boston Museum appears to have been inscribed with the name of the goddess.¹⁵ She was apparently very popular in the centuries around the Christian era because her images are not confined to the Sunga period; they again recur in the Kushan age in the first-second centuries A.D. It is therefore surprising that the divinity so commonly represented in the terracottas should be so rare in the stone sculpture of the Sunga and the Kushan periods. This only shows that these plaques of Vasudhara were used only on certain occasions, perhaps for ritualistic purposes. Her distinguishing symbol consists of three fish which are shown suspended from a

string held in the right hand. This emblem again recurs in the stone image of Vasudhara in which a pair of jars is the distinguishing symbol. The fish is one of the eight auspicious symbols (*ashta-mangalakas*) for the Jainas and was thought to symbolise fertility and vegetative prosperity.

An important goddess of the Hindu pantheon and the presiding deity of the Sakti cult, Durga, came to be represented in her Mahisha-mardini (the destroyer of the buffalo-demon) form in terracottas for the first time in the Sunga period. One such plaque is now preserved in the Archaeological Museum at Amer near Jaipur. It is a flat plaque in the Sunga tradition in which is carved the four-armed goddess. Her lower right hand is placed on the back of the buffalo (*Mahisha*) and the right upper hand holds a trident (*trishula*). The goddess has



FIG. 6
Goddess Vasudhara from Mathura,
c. 2nd — 1st. century B.C.

on her head a circular mark, which was applied by young women as a mark of beauty. She has placed her left leg on the head of a recumbent lion which is her mount (*vahana*).

Pls. 35, 38

Among the interesting secular subjects portrayed in Sunga terracottas are a picnic party in a bullock-cart, couples or lovers in a garden, or a child learning his first lessons of the alphabet. The last mentioned subject is depicted in a terracotta recently found in the Punjab University's excavations at Sugh. Unfortunately, the upper half of the plaque is broken and only the lower part has survived. It depicts a child writing the alphabet on a board which is exactly similar to the wooden one used in north India even today. The Brahmi alphabet on the board can be clearly read and the letters help in dating the plaque to the second century B.C. on palaeographical grounds.

A plaque from Rajghat, a suburb of Varanasi (Banaras), shows a festival or fair. It is a rectangular plaque of which the border is decorated with pot symbols. In its upper half, there are three scenes, two on the proper right and one on the proper left. In the former is a scene of a cock-fight above and a bull-fight below, whereas on the left are shown two wrestlers. Below these can be seen four small jars in a row

which are similar to those of the toddy tappers of today and we can therefore rightly surmise that they contain liquor. In the lower half of the plaque is the ancient Indian circus showing an elephant-car (*hasti-yana*) drawn by four elephants; it is being driven by a young elephant. Behind the elephant is a bull's head which is identifiable as the boundary mark (*gomukh-khanda*) of a ploughed field. It therefore appears that the fair represented in the plaque was held not inside the habitation area of the village but on its outskirts.

The Sunga period (*circa* 187-75 B.C.) is thus an important era in the history of the terracotta art of India in the sense that the art had now become the people's art. The prolific production of plaques made possible by the use of moulds and the subjects portrayed by the artists in clay are of great importance inasmuch as they constitute an illuminating documentary on the contemporary life in the country. Though mechanical productions, the Sunga plaques are true works of art, and some of them can rank among the finest specimens of India's artistic heritage. The use of a single mould produced only flat plaques; this probably led to the use of the double mould in the succeeding Satavahana period.

8. The King and His Clay Horses

THE TERRACOTTA ART DOES NOT SEEM TO have flourished in the Deccan except once when the Satavahanas (*circa* 230 B.C.—230 A.D.) were ruling over this region. They were a mighty power and their empire, which was spread over a large part of the peninsula, was one of the largest known to Indian history. A legendary story is told of a Satavahana king, the founder of the dynasty who, as a child, used to play with clay soldiers and horses. They later were brought to life and helped the king to defeat his overlord and establish himself as a sovereign monarch. The legend, though of course apocryphal, is the one probably portrayed in a panel carved in low relief from Jaggayyapetta (Andhra Pradesh) which depicts a prince playing with toy horses and elephants. In the Satavahana terracottas, animal figures, and the horses particularly, richly caparisoned, are predominant. And what is more, the human figures from Satavahana sites, which are shown awkwardly squatting, fit tightly on the back of the horses. They were perhaps only horse-riders (*ashvapala*) who could be separated from their steeds.

The Satavahana art flourished in their vast empire stretching from coast to coast and their important centres of art which have so far come to light are Ter, Nevasa, Kolhapur, and their capital city of Paithan (ancient Pratishthan), all in Maharashtra; Kondapur, Dharanikota and Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh; and Banavasi and Sanatti in Karnataka. But stray specimens have also been found in the early historical levels at several sites in the central and western parts of India and in the Deccan. The characteristic feature of these terracottas, which distinguishes

them from others of their kind, is the material of which they are made. The fine alluvial clay which abounds in the Indo-Gangetic plain in the north is not found in the Deccan. The black cotton soil of this region is certainly not suitable for making terracotta figures and the artist who worked in clay had therefore to find some other alternative medium. He was fortunate enough in obtaining kaolin, patches of which are found in many areas of the Deccan. It is a much finer material than clay and the terracottas therefore do full justice to the skill of the artists who fashioned them; for in its plasticity and durability, kaolin is much superior to clay.

The technique employed by the Satavahana artists is entirely different from that was in vogue in the Sunga period. It was a highly specialised technique which produced terracottas in the round, like free standing sculptures, and were hollow within.¹⁶ As against the single mould used by the Sunga artist, two different moulds, one for the front and the other for the back, were made. A thin layer of clay was pressed in each of the moulds, and both the parts were then joined by a fine ribbon of clay and touched up. Some of the Satavahana terracottas have holes in places which were apparently intended for letting out the hot expanded air resulting from baking. Some terracottas also indicate the use of a double mould fitted in a master cover. This is indicated by a thin line at the joint. This technique, which was highly specialised, does not appear to have been used elsewhere in the country. It does not however seem to have been evolved locally, but is supposed to have

been imported from the Roman empire where it was in vogue at the time. The few hollow terracottas found in the Kushan levels of north Indian sites and even earlier at Taxila and some other places also owe their inspiration to the classical world. This double mould technique is best seen in the Satavahana terracottas from Paithan, Kondapur, Nevasa and Ter. Moreover, a few terracottas of Roman origin have actually been found at Ter (Dist. Osmanabad, Maharashtra) which has been described by classical writers as the greatest trading emporium in the South.

PL 50

The Satavahana terracottas include male and female figures, couples and animal figurines. Among the female images, the woman with a parrot was a favourite theme of the artists. In the full bloom of youth, she is often shown sitting, left hand holding a parrot whose wings are schematically shown by concentric circles. In some specimens the parrot is shown pecking at the heavy breasts of the woman, but in most cases the bird is seen eagerly looking at the bunch of mangoes, usually three in number, held in her right hand. These figures are shown with rather sparse jewellery as compared to those of the Sunga period which are always loaded with necklaces and other ornaments. The women portrayed in the Satavahana terracottas wear a forehead band having a central jewel or a floral boss and a similar one is also seen on the left and right of the head. The head-dress is not as elaborate as the Sunga one, but on the contrary is rather simple. The whole mass of hair is piled up and gathered in an elongated roll on the top of the head; this can be identified as the *dhammilla* type of hairdo. Some of the women wear a bicornate head-dress and some have their hair done in the peacock-plume fashion similar to that of the *yakshis* on the Sanchi gateways.

PL 45

PL 44

Pls. 40-43

The necklaces are generally two but sometimes only one; the shorter one is a simple cord of two strands with a round

medallion in the centre; the other one is composed of multiple bead-strings with rectangular spacers at regular intervals. The latter can be identified as the *phalaka-hara* referred to by Kautilaya in his *Arthashastra* and has parallels in the specimens worn by women sculptured in the early cave temples of Western India. Sometimes, the bigger necklace consists of a double strand having leaf-shaped pendants and an amulet, sometimes gadrooned and collared, in the centre. Some women are also shown wearing a long necklace (*hara*) of cords with amulet pendants attached to it; it is worn in the *upavita* fashion like the sacred cord of the Hindus. The armlets are simple or may be highly ornamental; the former category consists of plain coils or beaded bands which sometimes have an ornamental crest. Plain bangles were also worn; they may be representative of shell bangles because such bangles have been found in large numbers at Satavahana sites. But rarely we also come across exquisitely panelled bracelets, which were a rage in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire and may have therefore been imported into India along with other merchandise. The girdle is usually composed of two strings of beads. We do not know whether they were the imported ones because the *Periplus*, a first century sailor's handbook, records girdles as one of the items imported into Western India from the Roman Empire. The anklets are always plain and simple.

The female figure is characterised by a plump face and heavy body. The woman is shown normally with a large flattish nose with wide nostrils, and thick lips which remind us of the women sculptured in the Hinayana Buddhist caves of Western India. They wear only a lower garment which is a sort of short *dhoti* (*ardhoruka*) reaching the knees and tied round the loins; its front pleats are taken at the back and tucked in. The garment is secured on the waist by a girdle (*mekhala*), but it is so transparent that the female

Pls. 42-44

pudenda can be clearly seen. This again exhibits the ancient Indian artist's obsession to indicate the genital organs of the figures he fashioned.

PL. 45 A new class of figurines or rather plaques depict nude female figures, usually headless and with parted legs. The heavy breasts and the pudenda which are shown very prominently connect them with the fertility cult. But the most noteworthy feature here is the absence of the head, in place of which a lotus flower or a vase (*ghata*) is shown. These plaques appear to represent Renuka, the mother of Parashurama, who was worshipped by barren women for procuring an offspring.

PL. 46 The male figures too are shown squatting rather awkwardly and they too have a bunch of mangoes in the right hand and a parrot on the left. They are often of ponderous proportions and have a pot belly with the navel indicated by a deep hole. The genital organ is also clearly shown. Their head-dresses are of great variety, but they are not much different from those of the women. The Satavahana figures of men and women and of children are characterised by bold and vigorous physiognomy and sensitive modelling.

PL. 51 They are further noted for their dynamic vitality and plastic simplicity of form. Sometimes we also come across figurines of persons who look like Romans. One such head from Ter in Maharashtra has been identified as a fragment of the typical suspension lamp of Roman origin. Some indistinct Roman influence is also discernible in the figurines of children. **PL. 50** The smiling boy from Nevasa has distant relationship with his Roman counterpart found in the Grotto of Spertanga in Italy.

PL. 53 Another subject which the Satavahana artists portrayed with great care is the elephant and the horse-riders. The animals in both cases are fully caparisoned and have a covering, which is usually padded, on their backs. In some cases a saddle, very similar to the modern one, is also seen on the back of the horse. The riders

in several examples are presumably warriors as they wear baggy trousers and a long coat (*varbana*), over which is a chain-mail; on their head they have a domical helmet with a broad brim. Further, they have a bow in the right hand, whereas the left hand rests on a dagger fastened to the waist-band; the bow is shown hanging on the back of the elephant. Very rarely we come across a couple riding a horse; they are identical, at least stylistically, with the riders in the Karla caves of the late first century A.D. in Maharashtra.

Among the other animals represented in the terracottas of this period are the bull and the horse which occur frequently and the boar and fish which are rare. The bulls are modelled realistically and are undoubtedly made from a double mould. They are of the short-horned variety resembling the Sorati species which is seen in Maharashtra villages. They are decorated with garlands and bead-strings around their necks and sometimes a metal chain is also shown. In some cases there is yet one more ornamental band or a chain round the neck that passes from behind the hump. Rings are also occasionally found on the legs. These bulls are sometimes shown standing or sitting and the latter variety is identical with Nandi, Siva's *vahana* (mount) and can therefore be taken as objects of worship. Such bulls, in a sitting posture but miniature in size, are also found in the Satavahana levels in the Deccan; they have perforations and were obviously used as amulets. Usually the bull figurines are made of kaolin, but some of them are also of clay.

PL. 52 Another animal commonly represented is the horse. This animal, always shown standing, is a majestic steed, and is made as usual from a double mould. It is almost always shown well caparisoned. The reins consist of a simple double strap, but there are sometimes ornamental bands with floral bosses on the face, to which are sometimes attached small fly-whisks.



FIGS. 7 & 8

Male figurines from a megalith at Kadattur, Tamil Nadu, c. 2nd — 1st, century B.C.

They remind us of the ornamentation of the royal steed which is so graphically described by Bana in his *Harsha-charita*. There is also another but larger fly-whisk on the top of the head of the horse. A large, loose, ornamental band with a floral pendant is also seen dangling at the front on the chest of the horse. On the back is a piece of padded cloth decorated with a criss-cross pattern which perhaps represents the stitching marks. The stirrups surprisingly are absent. But there is one more ornamental band which is attached to the neck-band and is taken at the back from below the tail. The mane of the horse is always depicted trimmed whereas the tail is secured by an ornamental ring. In some cases, a plain ring is found on each of the horse's legs. The horse figurines are greater in number than those of the bull, but this may not have any connection with the story of the Satavahana king and his clay horses told above.

An outstanding Satavahana terracotta is a miniature Buddhist shrine or stupa re-

covered from Nevasa. It depicts a tree within a railing (*bodhi-ghara*) with young damsels (*shala-bhanjikas*) in the cardinal directions. It is hollow within and the marks on the interior clearly show that it was built up first by the ring method and then the decorative details on the exterior were added. A somewhat similar shrine is to be seen in a Sanchi relief of the first century B.C. The tradition of portable shrines still persists, but the Nevasa specimen is perhaps the only one of its kind which has survived till now.

The Satavahana terracottas mark a distinct technological advance, for the technique employed in fashioning the figures is highly specialised and is different from that followed in the north. The artists were successful in producing hollow terracotta figures in the round. This was the result of the use of a double mould, which, as we have seen, was probably of Roman origin. This technique continued to be practised later in the Ikshvaku period in the third century A.D. in Andhra Pradesh.

But the tradition soon deteriorated as the terracottas from Nagarjunikonda would show. These are made of inferior clay, full of impurities, and appear to be merely lifeless and artless mechanical productions. A few terracottas which have turned up

from megalithic burials in South India are akin to the Satavahana figurines (Figs. 7 & 8). The recent excavations at Kanchipuram and Uraiyur in Tamil Nadu have also yielded a few terracottas which belong to the Satavahana school.

Pl. 99

9. Diverse Divinities

WHEN THE SATAVAHANA EMPIRE WAS AT ITS zenith in the south, North India was slipping under the domination of foreign rulers. After the Mauryas, the Indo-Greeks, the Sakas, and the Parthians had been confined to the north-western frontiers of the Indian sub-continent. But their successors, the Kushans, whose territory was first limited to the frontier region on the north-west, invaded the Ganga valley in a very short time and established their supremacy over North India. Their empire was one of the largest known to Indian history; it extended far beyond the Indian frontiers into Central Asia, the region which now forms part of the U. S. S. R. It was a highly organised and efficiently administered empire under a strong central authority. But the Kushans, the foreigners of Central Asian origin, were soon naturalised on the Indian soil, so much so, that not only did they patronise Indian art and religion, but they also themselves became Indian and embraced the Indian religions, Hinduism and Buddhism. In fact, they out-Indianed Indians and surprising as it may seem, a great many divinities of the Hindus and Buddhists came to be represented anthropomorphically under the Kushans for the first time. Their contribution in other fields is also equally rich and these nomadic barbarians from the inhospitable, god-forsaken tracts of Central Asia became great patrons of Indian culture, the kaleidoscopic variety of which owes not a little to them.

The advent of the Kushan rule in the north marks the flowering of the Indian genius and its blending with the Greco-Roman and the Perso-Scythian, and there

was therefore all-round development in various fields of human activity. The Kushan art constitutes an illuminating chapter in the history of Indian art and the prolific production of stone sculpture of this period is matched by enormous quantities of terracottas which are found all over their empire. Of these, there were two main centres, Mathura in the north and Taxila in the north-west. Besides, there were a number of other centres such as Tamluk (Bengal), Patna (Bihar), Rajghat, Kausambi and Ahichchhatra (U.P.) and many others. The various types and fashions represented in the terracottas are betoken of the racial influx that was characteristic of the period. It was an extensive empire peopled by men and women of different nationalities like the Greeks, the Romans, the Scythians, the Parthians, the Iranians, the Central Asians, and many others and they all naturally came to be represented in the terracotta art. Professor Benjamin Rowland Jr. explains it thus: "The very geographic position of the Indo-Scythian (Kushan) empire straddling the trade routes between Rome, Iran and China made it in many ways the very centre of the world in the early centuries of our era. Its role in history was one of absorption and diffusion, and this function is nowhere more strikingly illustrated than in the art that flourished under Kujula Kadphises and his successors."¹²

The Kushan terracottas present an altogether new facies and a greater variety. Stylistically they fall into two distinct groups, one refined and the other crude. This twofold art style has parallels in stone sculpture also. It is indeed surprising that after producing the delicate and

charming terracottas in the Sunga period the artist should have made such crude figurines. Dr. V. S. Agrawala has a convincing explanation for this phenomenon. He states: "The reappearance of a crude art style in this period may have been due to the influx of wild tribes from Scythia in Ser-India with their crude art canons. . . . Though it is a long stride from Ghosi (in U.P.) to Yotkan (in Central Asia), still resemblance is to be found in the terracottas from two sites."¹⁸

PL 60

The repertoire of the Kushan terracottas is most varied. The secular life of the period, rich in social content, is reflected in the terracotta art. In these we meet noblemen with tall head-gears characteristic of the Scythians, Kushan soldiers, amorous couples (*mithunas*), musicians playing on various musical instruments, bewitching damsels in poses as alluring as those sculptured in stone and the usual mother and child groups. The dwarfs and grotesques (*vamanakas*), who are nude, were mould-made. But the figures of musicians — pipers and drummers — being hand-made, are crude. They represent a foreign type, perhaps Iranians or Parthians.

The toy carts and chariots of the Kushan period are unique among Indian terracottas on account of their variety. The children in the Indus cities of the third millennium B. C. had toy carts and animals with moveable heads, but later children in other areas only had animal toys. The Kushan toy carts display how ingenious the artist was. The toy had a box-like frame, on the front face of which were carved a pair of bullocks or horses as the case may be, and at the base of the frame was a hole for fixing wheels and a blind hole at the front for fitting in a stick with which the child could pull the cart. For the bird chariots, the hole was provided in the body itself through which a stick could be inserted for fixing the wheels. Besides, there were small human-shaped pots with stylized hands and feet and with the genital organ depicted. Such pots have also been reported from Patna

PL 67

PL 68A

(Bulandi Bagh), which have been dated to the Sunga age.

PL 39

The terracottas with religious affiliations are far more interesting. A number of gods and goddesses of different pantheons came to be represented in terracotta for the first time during this period. They were obviously given the forms that were imagined by their worshippers as representative. This was certainly due to the religious eclecticism of the Kushan rulers and also because of the advent of the Bhakti cult and that of a personal god that has made Hinduism the most individualistic faith in the world. We have figurines of Brahmanical and Buddhist deities and the lesser divinities like the *yakshas* and *yakshis*, the *kinnaras* and the *nagas* and many other godlings. Among the gods we have Siva, Durga (Mahisha-mardini), Surya, Karttikeya, the Seven Mothers (*sapta-matrikas*) and Ganesha. Sun worship was introduced by the Sakas from Iran during this period and hence the occurrence of the images of the Sun-god. So also is the case with Ganesha whose earliest images, though extremely rare, first came to be fashioned in stone and clay in the Kushan period. And finally, the most important contribution of the Kushan artist was the representation of Buddha in the anthropomorphic form both in stone and clay.

PL 64

Among the clay images of deities, perhaps the finest is a plaque from Kausambi showing Kamadeva within a flowery border. The god of love — Bhagavan Kusumadhva — is seen standing as a young man, decked with garlands of flowers as well as wreaths of mango leaves and sprigs (*amra-manjari*), and holding ready a sheaf of invincible arrows and his tall bow. A plaque showing a nude female figure is also noteworthy.

PL 56

A rare form of great iconographical interest is that of the Sun from Mathura. The Sun-god is shown wearing the *udichya-vesha*, the dress of a northerner, consisting of a full-sleeved tunic (*varbana*) and trousers (*svasthana*) and top boots — all very reminiscent of the Kushan dress. But

it is unique on account of the wings which distinctly emphasize the early Vedic concept of the sun-bird. Another rare specimen is that of Hermes-Aphrodite from Rajghat which very possibly provided the inspiration for the fashioning of the Ardhanari-shvara (half-male, half-female) form of Siva.

PL. 64

An achievement of the Kushan artist worth noting was the modelling of complete figures of inordinately large size and in the round. Among these the representations of Panchika and Hariti are quite frequent. Though coarse in rendering, they demonstrate a bold attempt and conception, and can be taken to be the predecessors of the life-size terracotta statues of the succeeding Gupta age.

A new ritualistic object that was introduced in the Kushan age was the votive tank which is found in terracotta only (Fig. 9). These are model shrines which were probably of Parthian origin as their analogues in West Asia would show. It is usually a four-walled enclosure with lamps at the four corners and birds perched on the walls. Within the enclosure is the

figurine of the Mother Goddess who is shown installed under a shrine. It is thus clear that the ritual was connected with the worship of the Mother Goddess. It appears that this worship and the attendant ritual was introduced by the Hellenized Parthians in some Iranian form in Gandhara (roughly the region of the Kabul valley in Pakistan and Afghanistan) and from there it spread into North India. At Taxila four tanks were found actually in the place where they were dedicated by the side of a Buddhist stupa. In the terracotta votive tanks are found drummers who from their dress can be recognised as Parthians. This also would strengthen the Parthian association with votive tanks. It is said that miniature tanks of a somewhat similar kind are still dedicated to Yama, the god of death, by maidens in Bengal where these tanks are known as Yama Pukur. Their antiquity can be stretched back to the beginning centuries of the Christian era.

The Kushan artists seem to have concentrated more on stone sculpture and consequently the terracotta art received a setback as it was rather neglected. The

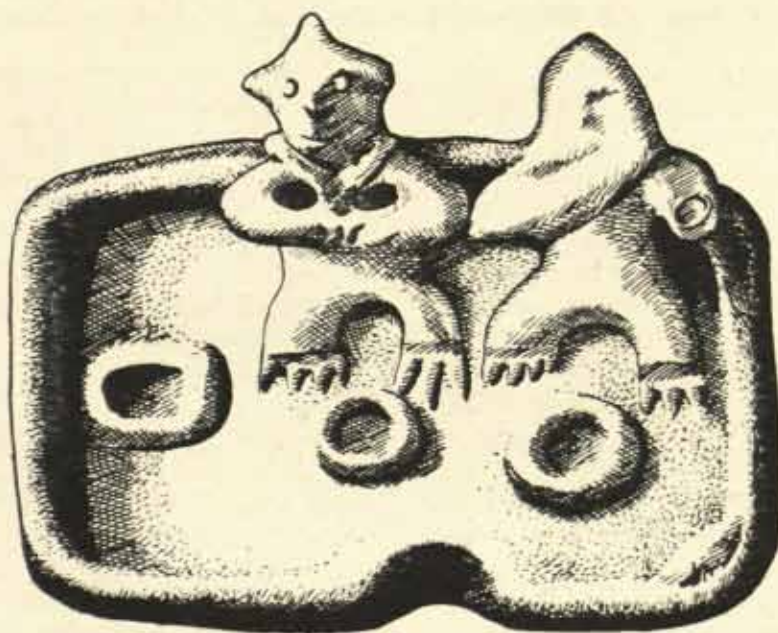


FIG. 9

A votive tank from Ahichchhatra (U.P.), c. 2nd century A.D.

terracottas of the Kushan age usually betray crude workmanship and the artist did not use the mould which was so commonly employed by the Sunga artists. The return to hand-made forms does not seem to have been successful. However, there is some evidence to show that a mould was occasionally used, particularly for producing large figures of which the busts were hand-modelled and the heads pressed out of moulds and provided with tenons. The figurines look coarser than the Sunga plaques. This was undoubtedly due to the inferior quality of clay used, full of grit and other impurities; it is often enough found to have been mixed with chopped husk. The baking also does not seem to have been done evenly; the section in several cases shows that the fire did not quite reach the core. The figures frequently have a deep red slip, rather crude, and sometimes they were also painted. Two fragments from Mathura (now in the Patna Museum) show traces of silver and gold.

Another important centre of the Kushan terracotta art was Taxila which stylistically represents a different branch of art known as the Gandhara school. It is characterised

by an overwhelming Hellenistic influence. The subjects portrayed are purely Hellenistic in the beginning and later an admixture of Indian, Hellenistic and Central Asian which were all due to the location of the region which was the meeting place of different cultures. In the final phases of this school of art the Indian element becomes predominant. Yet in all the different stages of its development, there is an unmistakable blending of the Hellenistic plasticity with Indian motifs and this has produced some of the finest specimens of Indian art.

The terracotta figurines of men and women, which form a distinct group, appear to portray Greeks or Greco-Romans. This is clearly evident from their physiognomy and expression and also the treatment of the hair, beard and moustaches. With the process of Indianization, there appears a group of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and lay personages who look every inch Indian, but the Hellenistic modelling distinguishes them from their Mathura counterparts. The production increases with the years and the Gandhara influence infiltrated into Kashmir, but its echoes become feeble by the time they reached the Bikaner region in Rajasthan.

Figs. 94-97

10. Grandeur of the Golden Age

THE GUPTA PERIOD (A.D. 240-570) HAS rightly been styled the Golden Age in Indian history. It witnessed a sudden outburst of activity in all the different fields of human endeavour and is marked by the flowering of the Indian genius in many fields. The Gupta artists have left for us in their handiwork some of the finest artistic creations which undoubtedly constitute a glorious heritage of humanity. The terracotta art travelled with political power and even beyond, and Gupta terracottas are therefore found over a large part of India; the Indian influence is illustrated nowhere better than in the clay figures from Fondukistan in Afghanistan. However the most prolific centres were in the north, in the Ganga-Yamuna doab, yet the Gupta figurines have also turned up in the east and the west of the Indian peninsula. As a matter of fact, the popularity of terracotta figures was so great that *lepya-karma* — terracotta manufacture — became a recognised technical term in the artistic vocabulary of the period.

With the introduction of religious structures of stone and brick, the Gupta period witnessed a tremendous activity in monumental architectural constructions. This, in turn, gave a fillip to the production of terracottas which came to be produced on a scale hitherto unknown. Dr. Agrawala observes: "Never before had the medium of clay been employed with such success to convey the message of art on a broad based scale. They even went further and bestowed on the plastic art in clay the dignity of full-fledged architectural productions with the result that a large number of stupas and temples were built entirely of plain and moulded bricks and were

loaded from top to bottom with decorative figure sculpture....Bana...speaks eloquently of the productions of terracotta art 'rising to the sky and conferring shining splendour on the four quarters of space.'"¹⁹ This achievement of the ancient Indian artist is attested to by the magnificent ruins of the Bhitargaon brick temple near Kanpur and many others. The brick structures were adorned with large terracotta panels depicting many gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon as also mythological scenes from the Epics and *Puranas*. Apart from the usual categories, the terracottas also now came to be employed in architectural decoration comprising carved and moulded bricks and tiles with human, animal and vegetal motifs. Some of the finest examples of this class have been found at Brahmanabad and Mirpurkhas (Sind), Nagari and Rangmahal (Rajasthan), Mahasthan (Bengal), Paharpur (Bangla Desh) and Bhitargaon (U.P.). There is a great correspondence between terracotta production and the contemporary stone sculpture.

As in Gupta stone sculpture, in terracotta art also the artist attained a degree of perfection never reached before or after in India. The technique of terracotta production was also improved as art evidence clearly shows. The clay used was extremely fine. The moulding technique, which was so commonly practised in the Sunga age, but was almost neglected in the Kushan period, was again revived in the Gupta period. An examination of the Gupta figurines would show that they were made by four different techniques: (i) use of a single mould; (ii) use of a double mould; (iii) partly moulded and partly hand-made,

and (iv) completely hand-made figures. Of these the figures made from a single mould are found in abundance. Most of them are detached male and female heads and mothers carrying babies. It is thus clear that small figures were usually made from a single mould. Although the single mould was known earlier in the Sunga period, the Gupta artist seems to have improved the technique by making certain modifications. The Sunga plaques are unfinished at the back, but the Gupta artist made the back flat by carefully removing all excess clay by means of a sharp tool or a bamboo strip, and after taking out the cast, further touched it up.

The figures made from a double mould are relatively fewer than those cast from a single mould. The figures made from a double mould can be further divided into two groups, namely, those which are hollow within and others which are solid. In some cases the human head was moulded in two parts, front and back separately, and joined together laterally; there are also attempts at moulding the two halves, right and left, separately and joining them along the ridge of the nose. Some of the figures are partly moulded and partly hand-made. This technique, however, was employed to make figures of a large size and panels which were carved for embellishing the exterior walls of brick temples and stupas. Finally, there are some figures which were entirely hand-made. They are not refined but are comparatively crude.

There are a number of Gupta terracottas which are treated with a deep red slip. It was probably applied to cover up defects in surface treatment and also for making the surface of the figures smooth and glossy. The application of the slip in many cases has rendered the figures a kind of luminosity which, coupled with the refined modelling, has made them exquisite specimens of the Indian terracotta art. Even the life-size figures and brick panels have been treated with a slip. The Gupta figures are, as a rule, well baked; the brick panels

especially were baked to extra hardness. Nonetheless there are a few images which are unbaked.

Another important feature of the Gupta terracottas is that they were sometimes painted in variegated colours. In some cases the lower garment is indicated by painted stripes in red and white and wavy lines and even the breast-band (*stana-patta*) is also painted. The short drawers (*satula*) worn by a child from Rajghat (Varanasi) are also shown by painted patterns. It is interesting to note that Kalidasa, the greatest Indian poet who lived during the Golden Age, refers to a painted clay figure of a peacock in his famous play *Sakuntala* (Act VII).

Gupta terracottas are found almost all over India except the South which was never under the Gupta rule. In Maharashtra they sometimes turn up in the excavations of ancient sites, although this region also was not directly under the Guptas. Their occurrence here, however, is due to the close relations between the two ruling houses—the Vakatakas who were then paramount in the Maharashtra region and the Guptas. The influence of the latter reached Maharashtra as both the families were matrimonially related. The most important centres of Gupta art were Tamluk (Bengal), Patna, Kausambi, Rajghat, Sravasti, Bhita, Ahichchhatra and Mathura, which are all in North India.

Gupta artists handled both the secular and religious subjects with equal facility. But the religious subjects are more important from the standpoint of the iconography of various gods and goddesses. This was the period when the ruling emperors were themselves staunch Hindus and were engaged in the revival of Hinduism. This was the time also when the iconography of different divinities was in the process of standardization. The figures of gods and goddesses fashioned by the artists of this period are therefore of great iconographical interest. Among these are the images of Siva, Parvati, Surya, Ganesha,

PL 74

Pls. 71, 72

Pls. 79, 85 and *Mahisha-mardini* Durga and many other divinities which have been found.

Pls. 88, 89 The Siva and Parvati heads from Ahichchhatra, now preserved in the National Museum, New Delhi, are among the finest specimens of Indian art. The Sun plaques, usually circular, show the deity in the upper part, with seven horses carved in the lower half. Similar stone sculptures have been found at Mathura. The Sun-god wears a full-sleeved coat, trousers and padded boots. This dress of the god has been prescribed by Varahamihira in his *Brihat-samhita*, an early sixth century work, in which we are told that the god wears *udichya-vesha*, that is, the dress of a northerner. But in reality this was a characteristic Iranian dress and since sun worship was introduced into India by the Magi priests from Iran, the Iranian influence on the iconography of the god is easy to explain.

The Sun-god plaques also show Arun, his charioteer, and Usha and Pratyusha, the consorts of the Sun-god. Below them are to be found two *naga* figures, one on each side of the horses. They are said to be sons of Kadru, the goddess of darkness, and are supposed to have enveloped the solar horses until they were chased away by Garuda. This only shows that the iconography of this god was standardised because in the Sun images of the Kushan period the chariot of the god had only two or four horses and the two goddesses and the *naga* figures were absent.

A similar development in iconography is also to be noticed in the terracotta figures of *Mahisha-mardini* Durga. As we have seen, plaques depicting this goddess begin to occur from the late Sunga period in the first century B.C. In the Gupta terracottas the goddess is shown with four, six or eight arms and is seen engaged in subduing a buffalo standing on its hind legs and with its head uplifted in front of the goddess and body stretched across her legs. In some cases, particularly in the figures from

Ahichchhatra the lion — Durga's mount — is absent.

Among the minor divinities, the most interesting are the figures of Naigamesha, with a goat-like face and long ears with pierced holes or slit marks. The image has been identified as the god Naigamesha who was invoked as the presiding deity of childbirth and was considered to be another form of Skanda. Both the male and female forms of the god have been reported from Mathura and Ahichchhatra. Also noteworthy is a plaque from Rangmahal (Rajasthan) depicting Aja-Ekapada (Fig. 10).

Although nudity is generally absent in the Gupta terracottas, a class of female figures, completely nude, have been unearthed from the Gupta levels in North



FIG. 10

Aja-Ekapada from Rangmahal, Rajasthan, c. 4th century, A.D. After *Lalit Kala*, No. 224, Pl. XXIV. Fig. 15. Courtesy, Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum,

India. She is identified as Kotavi who is supposed to roam about in villages as a portent of impending misfortune. She has been described as counting her fingers as if counting the dead, a naked woman wandering all day long in the parks. She is supposed to be a primitive South Indian goddess who was later admitted into the Hindu pantheon as a form of Durga.

A peculiar class consisting of figures which have been identified as cult images also began to be made in the Gupta period. They comprise multiple human heads, either two or three arranged in a row, with one body and only one pair of arms, set on a hollow cylindrical base. In the left hand is sometimes seen a cup and in the right some object like a mongoose which is generally found in the hands of Kubera, the lord of wealth. In some cases, such a cult image is shown holding a child in the hands, suggesting a connection with childbirth and fertility; this is further supported by prominent breasts. These figures were made in two parts; the face was moulded but the body was made by hand and other ornaments were applied. The hollow cylindrical base on which the figure stands was obviously made on a potter's wheel. A large number of such cult figures were found on a platform in the excavations at Ahichchhatra (U.P.) indicating that they served as offerings. But as compared to other figures of the Gupta period, these images are extremely crude in all respects.

The outstanding contribution of the Gupta artist to the terracotta art was the manufacture of figures for the adornment of brick temples. The terracotta art thus attains monumental proportions during this period. A number of brick temples and stupas were erected in North India under the Guptas and were adorned with life-size terracotta figures and sculptural panels and were further ornamented with moulded bricks. More famous among these are the temple at Bhitargaon near Kanpur and the

Buddhist stupa at Mirpurkhas in Sind, besides many others. A large number of terracotta plaques adorning such Gupta temples have been found at Ahichchhatra in U.P. and at Rangmahal near Bikaner. The life-size figures of Ganga and Yamuna from Ahichchhatra, which once adorned the terraced temple at the site, are most noteworthy. They are characterised by extremely sensitive yet bold modelling. But, for a few exceptions, it appears that the spiritual experience in terracottas was less intense than in the case of stone sculpture.

The secular subjects of the Gupta age comprise mostly male and female figures, amorous couples (*mithunas*), and plaques showing scenes from daily life. They all exhibit the characteristically refined taste and charm of the Gupta style. Some of the male and female heads are so charming that one wonders at the skill of the artist who fashioned them. They are particularly interesting on account of their different fashions of costume, coiffure and head-dress and also the varied but always exquisite jewellery. The bewildering variety of all this wealth of detail is only matched by that painted by the Gupta-Vakataka artists on the walls of the Ajanta caves. Yet the most outstanding feature of these figures is the expression on their faces, a quality which also distinguishes the contemporary stone sculpture and painting. But the Gupta artists appear to have limited their workmanship only to the face; they neglected the human body which in most cases appears lifeless. The figures, however, conform to a set art style. They are all cast from a single mould, but are not as flat as the Sunga plaques. The rendering of the human form is elegant and the modelling of the facial features is superb. The men have a sharp pointed nose and prominent eyes; the women too have delicately chiselled features. Their nestling breasts remind us of Kalidasa's description of Parvati whose "breasts were so closely pressed together as not to admit even a

Pl. 87

Pls. 80, 81
90, 91Pls. 82, 83,
93

lotus filament between them" (*Kumara*, I, 40).

Pl. 76

The smaller plaques depicting scenes from daily life are also mould-made and usually have a hole at the top for suspension. The women portrayed in them no doubt convey the ideal of beauty of the age and appear to be the heroines of the classical poets. The daily life depicted in the plaques is also that of the aristocracy, the cream of Gupta society, and it is thus the world of Kalidasa that we see in them.

The figures which can definitely be classified as toys are those of horse-riders (*ashvapala*) and elephant guides (*hastipala*). They were made in two parts in two different moulds and were joined together later. These are mostly solid, but very rarely hollow also and are similar to the Satavahana horse-riders. These figures are comparable to those of Seleucia and the affinity becomes further intensified by the skull-cap of the rider. But the similarity cannot be stretched too far because a Sanskrit text, the *Vishnu-dharmottara* prescribes that the horse-rider should wear the northern dress. The horse itself is always a majestic steed, possibly from the Arab world; the horses from the Kambuja country were famous in the ancient past. The horses

and also the elephants are lavishly ornamented with trappings.

There are certain figures of men and women which can be easily distinguished as those of foreigners, more particularly from Persia and Central Asia, whose influx into the Indian population introduced new ethnic types during the Gupta period. They can be identified by their dress. They must have mixed freely with the local people and hence they too came to be represented in popular art, especially as many of them were employed by Indian princes in some capacity or other. Some of these "foreigners" are shown with grotesque features, a goat-like face or with protruding eyes similar to those found in the Kushan terracottas of such individuals.

Pls. 77, 78

A variety of animals can be seen in the terracotta plaques from Paharpur and they are also equally skilfully rendered. The Gupta artist also finds a new medium in pottery for his artistic expression. The variety of stamped and decorated pottery of this period is indeed surprising. The potters have used several decorative patterns, such as floral, geometric, vegetal, and animal. The shapely pots were also provided with equally graceful handles and animal spouts, particularly the crocodile-shaped ones (*makara-mukha-pranali*).

Pl. 73

11. Mediaeval Mannerism

THE DECLINE OF THE GUPTA POWER BROUGHT about a degeneration in the artistic activity of the country. This is especially true of the terracotta art which in the post-Gupta and the mediaeval period remained confined only to Bengal and Bihar in Eastern India. Besides these, a small centre flourished in Kashmir. Elsewhere in the country there was no terracotta art worth the name. This was undoubtedly because of the prevailing stress and strain of internecine wars between rival chiefs that was taking place, and later came the onslaught of the Islamic invaders from outside the country.

The most prolific centre of the post-Gupta terracotta art was Paharpur (now in Bangla Desh), where the terracotta sculpture was interwoven with monumental architecture. Here is the most voluminous work in brick and terracotta in the whole sub-continent of India. The temple complex at this place contained about 2000 terracotta plaques *in situ* and about 800 others were found during excavations. They are dated from the eight to the tenth centuries, but the production of the plaques seems to have continued for a couple of centuries more. These plaques depict human and animal motifs and besides there are a number of divine figures of Buddhist and Brahmanical deities. But the most interesting are the plaques illustrating Indian fables. "The terracotta and stone panels from Paharpur," observes Stella Kramrisch, "belong to two distinct traditions; the one, numerically in the minority, is an eastern and provincial version of contemporary sculpture in Madhyadesha, but the other is an undiluted and indigenous Eastern Indian contribution."²⁰ On the whole, the expressive quality of these plaques is rather

crude and one can notice a definite decline in the terracotta art. Very similar plaques have been found at Dah Parbatiya (Assam), which show a very close connection between the mediaeval art of Bengal and Assam. Slightly different in style but belonging to the same age are the plaques from Kundilanagar (Assam).

An early mediaeval Indian school of terracotta art existed in Kashmir from where we have some of the most charming terracottas of the reign of Lalitaditya Muktapida (A.D. 700-736). Most of them are from Akhnur and Ushkar (ancient Huvishkapura) near Baramula (Varahamula) where Lalitaditya had founded a monastery around A.D. 720. The terracotta heads were found in excavations along the whole length of the walls of this monastery. They were apparently fired separately in a kiln and attached with wooden pegs. They bear close resemblance to the latest Gandhara stucco reliefs, yet at the same time have also inherited the Gupta charm. These figures are characterised by delicate and refined modelling and the physiognomy of the figures demonstrates that the people are a cross between the Indian and the Greek or Romans. Some scholars are therefore of the opinion that these images are the handiwork of Gandharan sculptors from Taxila who, after having lost all patronage in Gandhara, sought shelter in Kashmir. As Professor Rowland observes: "The heads of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and lay personages from this and other eighth century sites are in a style equivalent to the last phase of Gandhara sculpture in which the classical types have been endowed with a certain sensuousness and warmth by the infiltration of the Indian Gupta style. Actually the

Pl. 93

Pls. 94-97

nearest equivalent for this phase of Kashmir sculpture is to be found in the semi-classical, semi-Indian figurines in terracottas from the seventh century monastery at Fondukistan in Afghanistan."²¹ Some scholars, however, are of the opinion that these figurines should be dated to the late Gupta period (6th century A.D.) on stylistic grounds.

With the advent of the Muslim rule in India it was neither desirable nor possible to erect religious edifices and that too in brick or clay. Consequently all artistic activity then comes to a grinding halt. We witness some isolated attempts here and there and among these we find a great monument in Eastern India in the tradition of Paharpur. Mathurapur Deul (Bengal), though damaged to a great extent, is an imposing structure built in A.D. 1665. It is adorned with purely ornamental patterns

as also human, animal, and vegetal motifs; they display a dynamic vitality and plastic simplicity of form and are extremely interesting because they embody plastic designs of the pre-Muslim as well as the post-Muslim times. Some scenes are marked by descriptive realism and the representation of detail in them is indeed awe inspiring. This is very much in evidence in the *Kirtan* (religious discourse) scene. The rendering of animals shows great skill in sympathetic movement. In the plaques depicting hunting scenes we find Hindu and Muslim potentates while Portuguese soldiers also are seen in some of the panels. In the Chandranatha Siva temple at Hetampur in the Birbhum District (Bengal) we find copies of European portraits and coats of arms. They are all rendered with great skill.

PL 100

12. Peristent Traditions

THE FOREGOING SURVEY OF DIFFERENT schools brings into relief the rich variety of the terracotta art of India. The specimens that have survived through the centuries are only a fraction of the entire collection; innumerable pieces still lie buried deep in ancient mounds. Many more must have been destroyed and some immersed in rivers, streams, or lakes after their ritualistic use as is done even in our own times. The art has survived the vicissitudes of history and exists till today among the urban and the village folk as well. A variety of images of gods and goddesses, human beings and animals are still fashioned in clay and are discarded after use.

A proper history of the development of the terracotta art in India is yet to be written. Notwithstanding the vast collections that lie deposited in our museums, the story of the evolution of the clay art is inadequately documented; there are still several missing links in the story. We have as yet no specimens of the earliest stages and the "dark age" is darker so far as the terracottas are concerned. The "Timeless" types and the figurines from South Indian megalithic burials still hang in a chronological vacuum. The findspots of several outstanding specimens remain as yet unknown; those from older excavations have often not been recorded accurately. Even the recent excavations, known for their scientific methodology, have failed to a considerable extent in providing a firm chronological basis for the terracottas. As far as they are concerned, there is only one stratum in our excavations which lumps the three most important schools—the Sunga, the Kushan, and the Gupta—into one cultural period. Even the most charm-

ing Mauryan dancing girls have to go hand in hand with the inarticulate female figures—the so-called "Timeless" types—which are decidedly older. The dynastic affiliations may not be valid for cultural phases, but they have their utility in the phases of art for the sake of easy identification or grouping and also for the growth of the social and religious ideas such as the miniature stupas, figures of gods and goddesses, and female figures with varied coiffures and costumes such as those from Bikaner.

The distribution of findspots amply bears out the fact that the terracottas followed dynastic power; but culture transcends all political barriers and the terracottas therefore also occur in areas which were situated outside the jurisdiction of a particular ruling house. This explains, for example, the occurrence of Sunga terracottas at Taxila and the lingering Gupta charm in the figurines from Fondukistan.

The rich and varied content of the terracottas should convince us that this art was not the monopoly of the poor man only but was the medium of art expression of all classes of society including royalty, and the art therefore can rightly be called the "People's art."

The terracotta art flourished in this land to such an extent that it hardly has parallels elsewhere. An important factor which contributed to its rapid development was the use of terracotta sculpture on architectural edifices as a means of ornamentation. Not only did large terracotta panels adorn the religious structures but even certain architectural members were made of clay. Moulded bricks (*chitrini ishtikah*) are referred to in the *Jaiminiya Sutra*. Shabara in his *Bhashya* quotes the *Taittiriya*

Aranyaka, thus taking back the antiquity of moulded bricks to Vedic times. Unfortunately, no remains of such an early period have survived the ravages of time and man.

Another important aspect of the clay art has rightly been pointed out by Coomaraswamy who observes that they are "important not only as documents of the religious culture but as documents of the history of art." ²² For prehistoric religion we

have to depend to a considerable extent on the terracotta figures, human and animal. Even for the historical period the terracotta representations of deities of various pantheons are equally important for the simple reason that the people of this land—the Hindus, the Buddhists, and the Jainas—were and are devout image worshippers. Even today clay images are made in hundreds on special occasions for worship.

Notes on the Plates

PRE-HARRAPAN AND HARRAPAN

- PL. 1** A female figure representing the Mother Goddess of the Kulli culture. It terminates at the waist in a sort of pedestal. The face is not human but like that of a hen and the eyes are applied pellets with a hole pierced into them. The breasts are covered by the heavy jewellery which consists of a number of necklaces indicated by applied strips of clay with holes punctured into them to mark beads and having round medallions and oval pendants, also applied. The hair is dressed into an elongated roll at the back and is secured by a forehead band. The cones at the ears may be ornaments similar to those from Harappan sites. The hands, with bangles, are shown akimbo and the armlets are marked by incised lines. One such figure is shown holding a baby in her arms (Pl. 2A). This supports the identification of these figurines as Mother Goddesses. Early third millennium B.C. Height, 4 cm.
- PL. 2A**

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

- PL. 2B** A bull figurine of the Kulli culture. It has a prominent hump, but the horns are broken; the legs are short and pointed. The bull is painted in black vertical stripes all over the body and short transverse strokes are seen on and below the hump. Even today bulls are decorated in the same manner on Pola—bull festival day. Such figures have been found in good numbers at the Kulli culture sites and they were perhaps used as offerings at the shrine of the Mother Goddess. Early third millennium B.C. Length, 8.5 cm.

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

- PL. 3** A female figurine of the Zhob culture. It also ends at the waist like the Kulli figurine described above (Pl. 1). The nose is elongated and pointed and the mouth is an applied clay strip with a transverse cut. The eyes are thick pellets of clay having circular holes. The figure therefore appears terrifying, almost like an owl. The coiffure is covered by what looks like a piece of cloth, the ends of which roll on the shoulders. The breasts have applied nipples. Stuart Piggot is of the opinion that "these can hardly be toys, but

seem rather to be a grim embodiment of the Mother Goddess who is also the guardian of the dead—an underworld deity concerned with the corpse and the seed-corn buried beneath the earth."²³ Height, 5 cm.

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✓ A female figure from Mohenjo-daro. It is one of the finest figures from this site. The female is shown standing, but her arms and the legs are missing. It is completely modelled by hand and all the decoration is applied. The nose is pinched, the mouth incised and the eyes are pellets of clay. She wears a fan-shaped head-dress which is held in place by a band around the forehead, and the locks of hair are seen falling on either side of the face. She is loaded with jewellery. In the ears are probably rings. She wears a close fitting broad collar with pendants around the neck and a number of necklaces, all of which have oval shaped pendants which may actually be cowrie shells. The longest of them all has additional pellets of clay affixed to it. The necklaces are applied separately. They partially cover the pendant breasts. The girdle is three-stranded and has three round medallions. The figurine has been rightly identified as a representation of the Great Mother—"The Lady of the Heaven"—which has counterparts in Egypt and West Asia. Circa 2300-2000 B.C. Height, 18.5 cm. ✓

PL. 4

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

A male figure from Mohenjo-daro. It is completely nude with the genitals shown in appliqué. The nose is prominent and beak-like and rather broad; the mouth is shown wide open and the large eyes are applied pellets. He wears a curious type of cap, the tip of which is brought down in front under its rolled brim. The collar round the neck is indicated by applied pellets but the necklaces are painted in red and so also are the bands and the armlets. Considering the paucity of terracotta male figures from the Indus sites, the present specimen becomes important and may therefore be identified as a deity. Circa 2300-2000 B.C. Height, 13.8 cm.

PL. 5

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

PL. 6 A curious human figure from Mohenjo-daro. It is actually a caricature, with a beak-shaped nose, on either side of which are large round eyes marked by applied pellets of clay. On the head are small protrusions which may be tufts of hair. The belly is swollen and the hands are held behind at the back; they hold what looks like the skull of an ox. The legs, resembling those of a bird, are short and stumpy. The figure thus appears to be a bird shown in a human form and may therefore be a toy. *Circa 2000 B.C. Height, 9.5 cm.*

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PL. 7 Another caricature of a female from Mohenjo-daro. She is shown standing on short and stumpy legs. The right hand is broken and the right breast is also missing. Her nose, though smashed, is pinched and the mouth is an applied strip of clay with a transverse cut mark. The large round eyes are also applied. The turban on the head is worn in the same way as is done today. The necklace, fitting close to the neck, is also applied. With her swollen body, the figure can be identified as that of a dwarf who is referred to in the classical Sanskrit literature as a *vamanika*. *Circa 2000 B.C. Height, 12 cm.*

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

PL. 8A A bull figure from Mohenjo-daro. It is one of the finest representations of the typical Indian bull with its powerful muscular build and the characteristic dew-lap which is indicated by deeply incised lines. The horns are broken and the legs too are missing. With its slightly lowered head, the beast looks as if it is charging. The metal chains round the neck are marked by cut marks. A similar bull figure has also recently been reported from Kalibangan in Rajasthan. *Circa 2000 B.C. Length, 15.3 cm.*

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CHALCOLITHIC

Pls. 8B, C Both the bull figurines are from Kayatha (Dist. Ujjain, M.P.) and are datable to *circa 1700-1500 B.C.* The former represents more or less a naturalistic bull figurine but it marks the beginning of stylization for the hind part has only a rounded end. The hump is shown prominently but no details of the mouth and face are shown. The long curved horns are peculiar of the Gir variety which can still be seen in Central India. The other (Pl. 8C) is a stylized bull figure having a pair of horns and a hump on a stem with a rounded end. There can be little doubt that such

figurines must have served as votive offerings. Size: 8B—8 cm by 4.4 cm.; 8C—5.2 cm. by 1.5 cm.

(Courtesy, Deccan College, Poona).

A female figure from Nevasa (Dist. Ahmednagar). It represents the Mother Goddess of the early farmers of Maharashtra. The head and arms are only simple projections whereas the breasts are indicated by pinching. The lower part of the figure terminates in a trumpet base which, however, is broken. This is an extremely crude and primitive figure from the artistic point of view. *Circa 1200 B.C. Height, 16.2 cm.*

(Courtesy, Deccan College, Poona).

A female figure and a bull which were recovered from the excavations at Inamgaon (Dist. Pune, Maharashtra). Both of them were found in a hole in the corner of a house dated to *circa 1300-1200 B.C.* They were found placed over a clay box containing yet another female figure. All these objects are unbaked indicating thereby that they were used on some occasion only. The female figure illustrated here is without a head and she may therefore be taken to be the prototype of the goddess Vishva ("without head") who is referred to in the *Mahabharata* as a deity to be worshipped for the welfare of children.

The female figure is crudely modelled; the arms are mere curved projections, but the breasts are heavy and are betoken of fertility. The portion below the hips is broken. The figure has a blind hole in the abdomen and a similar hole is also to be found in the back of the bull figurine which was found along with her. We do not know whether these holes are intentional, but on inserting a stick in the holes, it was found that the goddess sits snugly over the bull, facing sideways. If this was at all the intention of the people who made these figures, we can say that here we have the earliest representation of a *vahana*—a mount—which becomes a distinguishing feature of deities of the Hindu pantheon in the historical period.

The figure of the bull is badly damaged and only one horn remains. Many of its anatomical features are missing, but even then it looks like the powerful Indian bull or Nandi (Siva's mount). *Circa 1300-1200 B.C. Height of female figure, 4 cm.; length of bull, 4.7 cm.*

(Courtesy, Deccan College, Poona).

PRE-MAURYAN AND MAURYAN

A female figure from Mathura which represents an early attempt at producing a representation of the Mother Goddess. It is crudely modelled

PL. 9

PL. 10

PL. 11

and is baked grey as most figures from Mathura are. It is entirely modelled by hand and the ornaments have been applied separately. The face is round, the nose pinched, and the eyes incised, but the mouth is not shown. The mass of hair is gathered in a large loop which is seen falling over the left shoulder. The indentations on the neck represent the collar and the longish necklace is in appliqué. The breasts are small, but the hips are broad indicating fertility. The girdle over them is also shown by incised lines. The legs are short and stumpy. The figure can be dated, on stylistic grounds, to *circa* 4th century B.C.

(AAA/2094-74; Courtesy, Kaiserbagh Museum, Lucknow).

PL 12

✓ A female figure from Kausambi. It is made of unbaked clay, and is black in colour. The figure is quite crudely modelled and is coarse in fabric. The female is shown standing but the legs are broken and the hands too are missing. The face is probably pressed from a mould whereas the other parts of the body are hand-modelled. The figure is shown wearing an extremely elaborate head-dress adorned with pearl or bead strings and rosettes at places. Besides, there is a disc-shaped crest at the top and on the proper left are three projecting knobs, all embellished with beaded ornamentation. In the ear are large discs similar to those of polished stone which are found in the early historical levels of sites in North India. The elongated necklace is composed of oval pieces stamped with a compartmental design. The double stranded girdle is also composed of similar pieces. The breasts are covered by the necklace. The figure can be identified as the Mother Goddess Earth (Mahi-mata) and can be dated to the Mauryan period, *circa* 3rd-2nd century B.C. Height 21.5 cm. ✓

(Courtesy, The Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay).

PL 13

✓ A female figure from Kausambi. It belongs to the same class as Pl. 12 above. The head is moulded whereas other parts of the body are hand-made. The ornaments are all in appliqué. The head-dress is broken badly but for the rosette on the proper right. The earrings look like coils (*sarpa-kundala*). Around the neck are a broad beaded collar and another necklace, the details of which are not clear. She also wears a garland in the way in which the sacred thread (*yajnopavita*) is worn. The broad girdle is composed of large rosettes and multiple strings of beads. The legs are mere stumps. The figure can be identified as a Mother Goddess and can be dated to *circa* 400-200 B.C. Size, 12.5 cm. by 6.5 cm. ✓

(AAA/1691-74; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta).

✓ A female figurine from Rajghat near Varanasi. It is rather a flat plaque and is decorated with deeply incised horizontal bands which are filled in with oblique cut marks and with similar vertical marks on the legs. The hands are short and stumpy and the breasts are small. The most noteworthy feature of the figurine is the mouth which is like that of a bird. It has a hole in it. The head therefore looks more like that of a pigeon. The association of a pigeon with the Mother Goddess is well known, and the figurine can therefore be identified as a Mother Goddess. *Circa* third century B.C. Size, 11.5 cm. by 6 cm. ✓

(AAA/2040-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

PL 14

✓ A female figure from Buxar. Although the breasts are not prominent, the hips are very broad and are thus indicative of fertility. She does not wear any elaborate head-dress and her hair is indicated only by incisions. The eyes are applied pellets and the nose is pinched. The hands are mere horizontal projections, but now only the right hand remains. The fingers of the hand and the toes are shown by deep incisions. The figure is treated with red slip and is decorated with horizontal stripes all over the body. There are two holes on the top of the head for suspension. Mauryan period, *circa* 400-200 B.C. Height, 14 cm. ✓

(AAA/1936-74; Courtesy, Upadhyaya Collection, Buxar).

PL 15

A *naga* figure with a human body from Patna. Such figurines have been found in the early historical levels of ancient sites in Bihar. The figure has a *naga* (cobra) head and its eyes are applied. The horizontal, incised lines on the head simulate those on a *naga* head, but the others on the lower half of the body are merely decorative. The incised circles on the neck and the other two on the legs, are characteristic of Mauryan figurines. The legs have supports at the back so that the figure can be kept in a standing position while worshipping. The pronounced curve of the hips is betoken of fertility. This is significant in the light of the worship of *napas* by barren women for procuring an offspring. The recent evidence from Bihar takes back the antiquity of such figurines to the middle of second millennium B.C. in the Neolithic period. The illustrated specimen, however, belongs to *circa* 400-200 B.C. Size, 5 cm. by 5 cm.

(AAA/1893-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna).

PL 16

A female head from Mathura. It is baked grey. The face is moulded and the complex head-dress is attached to it. The latter has two lateral projections having deep horizontal lines emanating from what looks like the dot-in-circle motif. On

PL 17

the proper right is a large rosette. The woman has parted her hair in the middle, but it is covered by strings of beads. The figure can be dated to *circa* 400-200 B.C.

(AAA/2095-74; Courtesy, Kaiserbagh Museum, Lucknow).

PL 18

✓ A female figure from Buxar. She is shown seated and has an antenna-like projection at the back which supports her. The face is moulded, but the other parts of the body and the head-dress are applied separately. The facial features are obliterated, but the figure is notable for its head-dress which is hollow from within. It consists of two lateral projections; the one on the left has beaded ornamentation while the other on the right has a band adorned with rosettes from which emanate strings which are indicated by incised lines. The loose ends of the head-dress are seen dangling over the ear-discs which are inordinately large and are stamped with rosettes. Around the neck is a collar with a rosette-shaped pendant. The breasts are heavy. The hands, which are stretched sideways, have a double bangle each that is considerably thick. On the legs too a heavy anklet is seen. The fingers of the hand and the toes are marked by incised lines. Unfortunately the right hand and the right leg below the knee are broken.

This figure is an excellent example of the class of female terracotta figurines from Buxar that are characterised by elaborate head-dresses but which, however, are different from other Mauryan figures. This figure can be assigned to *circa* 400-200 B.C. Height, 7 cm. ✓

(AAA/1927-74; Upadhyaya Collection, Buxar).

PL 19

A standing female figure from Bulandi Bagh (Patna). It is characterised by great charm and movement. The head appears to be moulded whereas the remaining parts of the body are hand-modelled. The nose is rather short but proportionate and the lips are thin; the eyes are obliterated. The ears are somewhat long and are disproportionate to the face; they are without any ornament. But from the position of her right hand and the objects in both hands, which are cylindrical with broad ends, she seems to be inserting ornaments in her ear. The hair is parted in the middle and there appears to be a *tilaka* mark on the forehead; it is however not distinct. She wears rather sparse jewellery: a broad torque round the neck which is applied, with the pattern on it indicated by small indentation marks. On either hand is a bangle affixed separately. The girdle, which is composed of collared beads, is two-stranded.

The figure is shown wearing only a lower garment, resembling a skirt which is secured on the waist by a girdle (*mekhala*). The fluttering

edge of the garment is indicated by deep, curved folds on the proper right. A part of the sash is seen over the girdle. The breasts are uncovered. Of the feet, the right one is missing.

The figure displays smooth, sensitive modelling. For an Indian woman, she looks considerably tall; the hands too are inordinately long. And what is more, she is surprisingly slender. All these features, together with the sparse jewellery and the skirt make her un-Indian. It therefore appears to be the handiwork of a Greek artist who attempted to portray an Indian woman in the full bloom of her youth. The figure is baked uniformly to brick red colour. Mauryan period, *circa* 3rd century B.C. Height, 11.6 cm.

(AAA/1788-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna. No. 8510).

PL 20

A standing female figure from Bulandi Bagh (Patna). It is noteworthy for its costume and head-dress. The delicate face is obviously moulded and the body made by hand. The forehead is exceedingly high and no hair is indicated. The head-dress is elaborate in the extreme; it is essentially of the bicornate variety and each lateral side is secured in cloth, the tufts of which are seen hanging on the proper right but those on the left are broken. In the centre of the head-dress is a large disc and two similar but slightly smaller discs crown the lateral projections. In between the discs are a set each of three cylindrical members. The head-dress is no doubt a copy of an earlier example of the Mauryan period. In the present example, no attempt has been made to indicate the details of the head-dress.

The figure is shown wearing sparse jewellery. In the right ear is a cylindrical stud and a large disc in the left, both of the same variety, but in one ear it is shown sideways and the other from the front. This is actually the manner in which the ear ornaments are shown in early Indian terracottas and stone sculpture too. Round the neck are two torques, both in appliqué. The thick bangle on the right hand is affixed separately; the other is broken.

The woman is shown wearing two garments, both affixed separately. The upper one covers the breasts but being sleeveless, leaves the arms bare. And what is more, it has a plastron-like attachment at the front to cover the abdomen as well. This upper garment can be identified as the *udaramshuka* of the later period. The lower garment, though resembling a skirt, consists of separate pieces, one each on either side. It bulges at the top and recalls to the mind the lower garment of the Kathakali dancers of South India. Its vertical pleats are noteworthy and the discs which are seen on the waist are

possibly mirrors. The legs are crudely modelled and are without any ornament. The figure gives the impression of a tribal dancing girl. It is dated to the Mauryan period, 3rd century B.C. Height, 26 cm.

(AAA/1791-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 4177).

PL 21

A standing female figure from Bulandi Bagh (Patna). She appears to be a dancing girl from her costume which consists of a skirt with up-turned ends. She is quite tall and slender. The facial features are rendered in a bold manner. The head-dress, which is only a piece of cloth covering the head, is broken at the sides; the hands too are broken. The legs appear like mere stumps. She does not wear any ornaments on her body; this is in sharp contrast to the Sunga figures which are shown with profuse jewellery. The exquisite features and the superb modelling are noteworthy. The figure belongs to the Mauryan period, *circa* 3rd century B.C. Height, 35 cm.

(AAA/1907-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 6067).

PL 22

The head of a female from Bulandi Bagh (Patna). The fine, sharp nose, thin lips and the elongated eyes with thin eyebrows lend her face an exquisite charm. But all these features are somewhat obliterated. The forehead is exceedingly broad and the hair appears to be parted in the middle. The head-gear is bicornate and is secured in a piece of cloth; its ends on either side perhaps had tassels, but they are now broken. On the top of the arched projections are holes possibly for additional attachment of flowers. Only the upper part of the right ear has survived. On the neck is a torque composed of ornamental pieces which are identical with those from Taxila. The figure is baked to a pinkish buff colour, Mauryan period, *circa* 3rd century B.C. Height, 12 cm.

(AAA/1809-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 4178).

PL 23

The head of a boy from Bulandi Bagh (Patna). The artist has been successful in delineating the chubby face and the smiling countenance with slightly parted lips. The ears are broken. The head-dress, in appliqué, is of the usual bicornate variety, and is covered in a strip of cloth, the ends of which are tied at the back but its tufts are left fluttering. Buff colour. Mauryan period, *circa* 3rd century B.C. Height, 11 cm.

(AAA/1804-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 4226).

A standing female figure from Patna. It is undoubtedly one of the finest specimens of the Mauryan terracotta art. But unfortunately the head, the hands, and the feet are broken. It is completely hand-modelled and the ornaments are applied separately. She wears a torque of broad pieces of carved flowers, but its right half is missing. At the back it has a pot-shaped member. She also wears a garland (*hara*) which is composed of rosettes, reels, tassels and some squarish pieces. The breasts are heavy and the waist slender, but the hips are broad. A girdle is seen around the waist and another, broader one, on the hips for holding the lower garment in place. The latter is four-stranded and is composed of gadrooned beads, rosettes and barrel beads. From the smaller girdle on the waist are suspended tassels. The lower garment is worn in rounds and its pleats appear to be gathered at the front and tucked in. The figure is noteworthy for the detail of its ornaments. It can be dated to *circa* 300-200, B.C. Size, 15 cm. by 6 cm.

(AAA/1813-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 9473).

A toy elephant from Buxar. It is modelled in a stylized manner. It has a red slip over which are groups of bands in cream colour and the figure therefore recalls to the mind the one (plate 15) which is also similarly treated. The toy elephant is in a fairly good state of preservation. Such painted toys have been referred to in early Sanskrit literature. The figure can be dated to *circa* 400-200 B.C. Height, 15 cm.; width, 15 cm.

(AAA/1942-74; Courtesy, Upadhyay collection, Buxar).

The figure of a mongoose from Patna. Its curved back and the thick tail which is stiff indicate movement. It has incised circlets all over the body. Mauryan, *circa* 400-200 B.C. Length, 11 cm.

(AAA/1993-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna).

The figure of a horse from Bulandi Bagh (Patna). The holes in the legs show that wheels were once attached to them. The bold and forceful modelling of the animal is indeed noteworthy. The mane is indicated by incised lines while the ornaments are in appliqué. On the head is probably a fly-whisk and on the forehead a beaded band; a similar band is also seen round the neck. The applied strip of clay on the chest marked with incised lines and circlets represents the breast band. The toy is datable to the Mauryan period, *circa* 400-200 B.C. Height, 18 cm.

(AAA/1895-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 4275).

PL 24

PL 25

PL 26A

PL 26B

SUNGA

PL. 27

A beautiful terracotta female figurine; it is perhaps the finest specimen of the Sunga period. The figurine is complete but for the part below the knees which is broken. In fact, it was originally found in four different pieces which have now been carefully joined together. It is a plaque made from a single mould. It depicts a young lady wearing lavish jewellery on her person, so much so that even her costume is covered by ornaments. Although the face is slightly plump, the entire body is slender. She appears to be somewhat stiff and motionless. She wears an extremely elaborate head-dress consisting of two lateral projections, both ornamented with pearl strings. A bun-shaped protrusion on the top of the head is also decked with strings of beads. In the lateral projection on the left five exquisite pins are stuck in; there are, from the bottom, the goad (*ankusha*), the second and the fourth resemble a *triratna*, the Buddhist symbol, and the central one is an axe, but the one at the top is not identifiable. All these are auspicious symbols. From them are suspended floral garlands.

In the ear are large cylinders stamped with floral designs and having a number of pearl tassels. Round the neck are a torque and a longish necklace composed of multiple bead strings. The slender waist is further narrowed by a small girdle, but a larger and elaborate one, made up of rosettes, is seen resting on the hips. The pearl strings, attached to the girdle on the waist, are shown reaching down the knee and, in their turn are embellished with elaborate patterns, resembling human figures. They have, at the lower end, a number of silk tassels, below which are some more pearl strings with similar tassels. On each hand are four bracelets, three of them either made up of bead strings or globules, whereas the remaining one is extremely elaborate.

The figurine is thus the most lavishly ornamented specimen in the entire range of early Indian terracottas. The jewellery is so complex that it defies description. One simply marvels at the mastery of the artist over the carving of such intricate details so perfectly.

The figurine is famous as the "Oxford terracotta" as it is presently housed in the Indian Institute at Oxford. It was formerly supposed to have been found at Kausambi, but it is now established that the original findspot was Tamluk (ancient port of Tamralipti) in West Bengal. It was discovered in 1888 and was probably in the possession of the Asiatic Society of Bengal from where it was taken by Professor Monier Williams to Oxford. Height, 21 cm.; breadth, 9.9 cm.

(Courtesy, Indian Institute, Oxford).

PL. 28

A plaque from Chandraketurgarh (Bengal). It depicts a female figure, probably a *yakshi*, which is stylistically akin to the Oxford terracotta described above. She is shown standing with her left hand akimbo; the right hand is unfortunately broken. The nose too is slightly smashed. Her head-dress has two lateral projections which look like elongated rolls embellished with pearl scrolls. Of these, the left one has five pins which are identical with those of the Oxford figurine of Plate 27. From the top, the first and the fourth are not clearly seen; the second is the *triratna*, the third a battle axe (*parashu*), and the fifth at the bottom is an elephant goad (*ankusha*). The ear ornaments are heavy cylindrical studs stamped with a rosette within a beaded border and having pearl tassels. The jewelled necklace resembles that found in the excavations at Taxila; it is composed of rosettes and has trefoil pendants. The armlets are simple beaded bands, but the wristlets are ornate. The slender waist is tightened by a girdle, but a broader girdle, having heavy beaded ornamentation, is seen over the hips. A number of strings, emanating from the waist band, and ending on the knees have clusters of pearls at their lower ends, but the pearl strings are shown continuing still downwards on to the legs which, however, are broken.

The *yakshi* also wears a lower garment which, however, is so transparent that even the female pudenda is clearly seen. And what is more, it is prominently shown. The garment is indicated by extremely thin, incipient, incised lines; it is probably worn in such a way as to leave a tuft hanging on the proper left. The entire plaque is decorated with a beaded border and even the floral pattern can be distinctly seen at the top. The plaque is made of extremely fine clay and is uniformly baked. The smooth and sensitive modelling is noteworthy. The plaque can be dated to the second century A.C. Height, 17 cm.; breadth, 10 cm.

(Courtesy, Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta).

PL. 29

A plaque from Tamluk depicting a female, probably a *yakshi*. It is akin to the figures described above, but is somewhat coarse in treatment. The lady is of ponderous proportions and wears profuse jewellery which was in vogue during the Sunga period. She has the forehead mark—*tilaka*—which first comes into vogue during this period. But in the present case the mark appears more to be a disc rather than the colour mark which, later in the tenth century, becomes the *sine qua non* of every married Hindu woman whose husband was living. In the earlier period, however, it was used more for enhancing the beauty of young damsels. The

plaque can be dated to the second century B.C. Size, 13 cm. by 5 cm.

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

Pl. 30

A plaque from Kausambi, depicting a female similar in all respects to the preceding example, but is more delicately modelled. Also noteworthy are the details of the jewellery and the pattern on the upper garment (*uttariya*). The most interesting feature is that the female is shown standing on a lotus and she can therefore be identified as Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth and prosperity. Second century B.C. Height, 13 cm.

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

Pl. 31

A plaque from Kausambi depicting an amorous couple (*mithuna*) sitting on a chair. The male is sitting with his legs hanging down with the female in his lap, both locked in each other's arms. Their legs rest on a rectangular footstool (*pada-pitha*). The face of the male is somewhat smashed; he wears a turban and a triple-stringed necklace. He also wears a lower garment which, however, is not clearly seen. His consort wears a turban which is adorned with strings of beads. Her lower garment reaching the knees (*ardhoruka*) is secured by a girdle composed of two bead strings. Her bangles and anklets are simple. The border and the vacant space on the plaque is filled in with a decoration of flowers.

The chair on which the couple is shown sitting is noteworthy since it is of foreign origin. It is an import from the classical world and was known to the Romans as *cella curulis*. It could have found its way into India with the Indo-Greeks on whose coins its representations are found. The chair has no back but has side arms, and the Indians certainly must have found it inconvenient for the simple reason that one cannot sit in it in the cross legged posture — the typical Indian posture. But since it was a novelty from the Western world, some dandies must have acquired it. The plaque is characteristic of the Sunga period and can be dated to the second century B.C. Size, 10 cm. by 8 cm.

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

Pl. 32

Fragment of a plaque from Kausambi. It depicts a couple enjoying conjugal bliss. The left half of the plaque showing the male is broken; only the right part depicting the female is now intact. The physiognomy of the female is not delicate but crude, nor does she wear profuse jewellery as is commonly the case with the plaques showing females. The figure can therefore be dated

to the late Sunga-Kanva period in the latter half of the first century B.C. The female appears to have combed her hair into a roundish bun on the left of the head; it is adorned with pearl strings which are also seen on the fringe of the hair line. Around the neck a torque is worn. The woman is completely naked and is engrossed in sexual union. Such plaques showing amorous couples were characteristic of the Sunga period. Size, 7.5 cm. by 6.5 cm.

(AAA/2047-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

Pl. 33

A terracotta mould from Tamluk depicting a standing male figure with arms akimbo. He wears a turban wound in rounds over the head. The ear ornaments are large discs with knobs in the centre. Round the neck is a broad torque. The armlets are simple bands but the wrist ornaments are made up of clusters of beads or globules. He probably wears a tunic and a girdle over the hips, but the details are not clear. On either side, near the arms, are large lotus flowers. The most important feature of the figure are the wings which are shown springing from the shoulders. They are suggestive of the super-human character of the figure which therefore can be identified as that of the Sun-god because of the wings, which distinctly emphasize the early Vedic concept of the sun-bird. This is thus one of the earliest representations of Sun which can be dated to circa second century A.C. on stylistic grounds. Size, length 20 cm.; breadth, 15 cm.

(Courtesy, Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta).

Pl. 34

A female bust of which the findspot is unknown. Stylistically it is more in the tradition of the *yakshis* of ponderous proportions which are common in Sunga art. The bold modelling of facial features is noteworthy. She wears a turban from below which the forehead disc (*lalantika*) is seen dangling on the forehead. The necklace is composed of amulets, cylindrical in shape, and the bangles are plain but for the decoration of cut marks on them. The figure was treated with a thick creamish slip all over. Circa 2nd-1st century B.C. Size, 7.5 cm. by 4 cm.

(Courtesy, Central Museum, Jaipur).

Pl. 35

A round plaque from Bhita (Dist. Varanasi, U.P.) depicting a village scene. It has a broad margin decorated with oblique incised lines. In the centre, on the left, is a house within a railing; it has a gable roof. In the background are trees and below is a pond with lotuses. On the right is a bullock-cart and in the lower part is probably a jungle because we see a deer in it. In the uppermost part is a couple inside an enclosure, but the details are not clear. The

plaque is noteworthy for the realistic portrayal of village life. It has a hole at the top for suspension. *Circa* 2nd century B.C. Diameter, 7.7 cm.

(AAA/1650-74; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta).

PL 36

A plaque from Kausambi depicting a female fan-bearer. The modelling is somewhat crude, and the characteristic profuse jewellery is also absent. Her head-dress, however, is elaborate; it has feathers attached to it. In her right hand is a large round fan (*vyanjana*) which is decorated with a large flower in the centre that, in its turn, is surrounded by smaller flowers. The plaque may be dated to the first century B.C. Size, 14 cm. by 8 cm.

(AAA/2046-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

PL 37

A plaque from Mathura depicting a standing female figure. The modelling is rather crude and the physical features are not delicate but heavy. The hair is gathered into a ball-like protuberance on the left of the head and a floral chaplet is seen in it. The ear-studs are cylindrical. The necklace is quite heavy and so too are the bracelets, four on one hand. The anklets too are quite heavy but plain. The lower garment is a short *dhoti* of which the front *kachchha* is seen hanging. Her left hand is raised above and is seen touching the coiffure. The plaque can be dated to the first century B.C.

(AAA/2098-74; Courtesy, Kaiserbagh Museum, Lucknow).

PL 38

A bullock-cart party from Bhita (Dist. Varanasi, U.P.). Six persons are seen in the cart, three on each side. On the right, the first is a man, and next to him, a woman with her right hand on a drum. She is being kissed by a man on her left. The arrangement on the other side is also similar but the details are not clear. There are eatables in a dish in the middle. All the persons appear to be having fun. *Circa* 2nd century B.C. Height, 7 cm.; length, 15.5 cm.; breadth, 12 cm.

(AAA/1630-74; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta).

PL 39

A squatting human figure with a vase-like body and a hole in the navel. The facial features are completely obliterated but for the nose and the knot of the head-dress. The necklace is an applied band and so are the hands. Late Sunga. *Circa* 1st century B.C. Height, 13.5 cm.

(AAA/1801-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 9271).

SATAVAHANA

The head of a female from Nevasa (Dist. Ahmednagar, Maharashtra). It is made of kaolin and is pressed out of a double mould. The modelling is crude but the facial features have been rendered in a bold manner. The broad flat nose and the thick lips are characteristic of the Satavahana figurines. Her hair is gathered in a projecting knot on the top of the head and is embellished with pearl strings at the base and in the middle. From the parting of the hair in the middle is suspended a large disc-shaped ornament (*jalantika*) which has an indistinct rosette pattern carved on it. On the sides of the head we can see the locks curled up. *Circa* first century B.C. Height, 4 cm.

(Courtesy, Deccan College, Poona).

PL 40

The head of a female from Paithan (ancient Pratishthan, the capital of the Satavahanas, now in Aurangabad District, Maharashtra). It has all the characteristic features of the Satavahana terracottas. It is noteworthy for its treatment of hair which is wavy. The curls frame the face while the whole mass of hair is dressed into a bun on the top of the head; it can be identified as of the *dharmilla* variety. It is secured by a pearl string at the base and similar such pearl strings adorn the bun also. In the parting of the hair (*simanta*) is a jewelled strip which is suspended from a large rosette at the base of the bun and has an outsize jewel (*chatula-tilakamani*) at the other end on the forehead. The figurine is of kaolin and is pressed from a double mould. It can be dated to *circa* first century A.D. Size, 5.5 cm. by 3.6 cm.

(AAA/970-74; Courtesy Patil Collection, Paithan).

PL 41

The head of a female in the full bloom of her youth. It is delicately modelled. The hair is combed into a bun which is lavishly ornamented with pearl strings. She wears a tiara (*ardha-mukuta*) having a large crest on the proper left and a smaller one on the right. The figurine is made of kaolin and can be dated to the first century A.D. Height, 4.7 cm.; breadth, 4.2 cm.

(AAA/963-72; Courtesy, Patil Collection, Paithan).

PL 42

A female head, made of kaolin, from Paithan. It is characterised by coarse facial features. The broad nose is slightly broken, the lips are thick and the eyes are shown wide open. On the forehead is the *tilaka* mark which was applied by young women as a mark of beauty. The bun on the top of the head is slightly broken but the forehead ornament is worthy of note. It consists of an outsize jewel which is fastened around the head by means of a double band.

PL 43

Circa second century A.D. Size, 3.9 cm. by 3.7 cm.

(AAA/984-72; Courtesy, Patil Collection, Paithan).

PL 44

A terracotta head of a female from Paithan. It is baked grey and is characterised by bold modelling of the facial features. The woman has a broad, snub nose and thick lips. She has parted her hair in the middle and in the parting line (*simanta*) is a pearl string from which is suspended a large rosette which can be seen on the forehead. *Circa* second century A.D. Size, 2.9 cm. by 2.2 cm.

(AAA/1000-72; Courtesy, Patil Collection, Paithan).

PL 45

A female figure, made of kaolin, from Paithan. She is shown sitting awkwardly. Unfortunately her head is broken. She wears profuse jewellery on her person. Round the neck are three necklaces. The shortest of them all consists of a tortoise amulet woven through a cord; the other one is an elaborate ornament composed of a number of heart-shaped pieces bearing a trefoil pattern, suspended by a double cord. The largest of the necklaces is worn in the *yajnopavita* (sacred thread) fashion; it is composed of a double beaded band. The ear ornaments are somewhat broken in the upper part, but they have pearl tassels. The armlets are beaded bands with jewelled crests; the bracelets too are jewelled. On the waist is a double cord and the girdle is nothing but a string of gadrooned beads. The jewelled anklets are fairly broad. The lady holds a bunch of three mangoes in her right hand and a parrot is seen perched on her left hand; it is shown pecking at the breast. The figurine is hollow within and is obviously made from a double mould. It can be dated to *circa* first century A.D.

Such male and female figures are quite common in the Satavahana terracotta collections and in many cases, the parrot is shown eagerly looking at the bunch of mangoes in the right hand. From literary evidence we can infer that the lady is trying to appease the parrot so that it does not divulge the conversation between her and her consort the previous night. Size, 7.7 cm. by 6.1 cm.

(AAA/956-72; Courtesy, Patil Collection, Paithan).

PL 46

The figurine of a male from Sanatti (Dist. Gulbarga, Karnataka). It is a clay figurine well baked and is treated with a bright red slip all over. The figure is shown sitting in an awkward manner with his legs stretched apart and the hands raised above. He has a plump face which betrays sensitive modelling. He wears an ornamental headgear which has a broad forehead band, a crest on the proper left and a fan-shaped

projection on the top of the head which is embellished with pearl strings. The necklace too is elaborate; it is composed of rosettes, cylindrical amulets and heart-shaped pieces. The other necklace, which is worn in the *yajnopavita* fashion, also has similar heart-shaped pieces and cylindrical amulets. The bracelets, however, are simple beaded bands. The cord round the waist (*katisutra*) is also simple. But the most striking feature of this figurine is that the person is shown with his organ erect. The nudity of such figurines is difficult to explain, but since they are found in good numbers at Satavahana sites in the Deccan, it is quite likely that they were used as votive offerings. Stylistically, they are related to the donor couples sculptured in the Yajnasri cave at Kanheri near Bombay and can therefore be dated to the latter half of the second century A.D. Size, 14 cm. by 12 cm.

(AAA/1079-75; Copyright, Director of Archaeology, Mysore).

A terracotta female head from Paithan. It is remarkable for its sensitive modelling. She represents a foreign ethnic type, probably a Scythian, as the short, thin nose, high cheek bones and the slit eyes would suggest. She can therefore be identified as a native of Central Asia. A part of the head including the forehead is broken badly, but what remains of the face bears eloquent testimony to the skill of the Satavahana artist, Paithan—ancient Pratishtana—was the capital of the Satavahanas, and it is therefore quite likely that people of different nationalities, especially merchants and soldiers, must have visited it frequently. In fact, some of them might even have been residing there and some may have found employment in the Satavahana administration. A charming Scythian woman naturally therefore came to be represented in the terracotta art. The present specimen is made of kaolin. It may be dated to *circa* first century B.C.—A.D. Height, 6.2 cm.; breadth, 6.7 cm.

(AAA/954-72; Courtesy, Patil Collection, Paithan).

PL 47

A terracotta female figurine from Banavasi (ancient Vijayanti, Dist. Karwar, Karnataka). It is made from a double mould and is treated with a dark red slip which, however, is somewhat crude. She is shown standing but the legs below the knees are broken. She wears large discs (*tatanka-chakra*) in her ears and a broad necklace. The bangles are plain. The lower garment is a short *dhoti*, folds of which are indicated by incised lines. *Circa* first century A.D. Size, 11 cm. by 5 cm.

(AAA/1076-75; Courtesy, Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, Mysore University).

PL 48

PL. 49

The terracotta figurine of a male musician from Sanatti (Dist. Gulbarga, Karnatak). It is treated with a dark red slip. The part below the thighs is unfortunately broken. Although the person shares the characteristic Satavahana physiognomy, he appears to be a foreigner from his cropped hair. Moreover, such foreigners playing upon musical instruments have been depicted on the gateways at Sanchi. The present specimen shows the man playing upon a flat circular drum which is hung round his neck by means of a double cord. It is beaten by means of curved sticks (*kona*). Such drums are still popular in Maharashtra where they are known as *daph*. *Circa* first century B.C. Size, 6.5 cm. by 5 cm.

(AAA/1080-75; Copyright, Director of Archaeology, Mysore).

PL. 50

A unique terracotta lamp from Ter (ancient Tagara, Dist. Osmanabad, Maharashtra). It is a suspension lamp in the form of a female bust of which only the head now remains. It is hollow and is provided with a central knob having a transverse perforation in which a corroded piece of iron is still seen. At the back of the head is a filling hole provided with a funnel-like lip to facilitate pouring in of oil. The face is characterised by a sharp fine nose which, however, is broken, and thin lips. The hair is curly and a band is fastened to it. Stylistically the figure can be dated to *circa* first century A.D. It is obviously an import from the Roman Empire. Such imported Roman lamps have been described in the early Sangam literature of South India. Height, 3.5 cm.

(Courtesy, Lamture Collection, Ter).

PL. 51

The figure of a child from Paithan. It is made of kaolin, from a double mould, and is fortunately complete. The child is fat and has a plump face, and is shown in a sitting posture. He has a broad flat nose and thick lips. The hair is curly and the figure appears to wear a thick tuft of hair on the head. The ear ornaments cannot be clearly seen. The necklace is a double bead string having a heart-shaped pendant with a trefoil carved on it. He also wears the sacred thread (*yajnopavita*). The armlets are simple beaded bands, but the bracelets cannot be seen. The girdle is composed of a double cord and a beaded band. The anklets are also simple. The navel is indicated by a deep hole. The child sits perfectly well on the horse of the next plate. *Circa* first century A.D. Size, 7 cm. by 4 cm.

(AAA/961-72; Courtesy, Patil Collection, Paithan).

PL. 52

The figurine of a horse from Paithan. It is made of kaolin, from a double mould, and is hollow within. It is a caparisoned steed, with a long garland or a beaded band around the chest

and on the back is a piece of padded cloth decorated with a criss-cross pattern which may indicate the marks of stitching. The reins consist of a plain double strap. The mane of the horse is neatly trimmed. By the side of the ear, on the head, is a fly-whisk. The tail of the animal is secured in an ornamental ring. Perhaps on the legs also such a ring was shown; it is, however, only indistinctly seen in the right hind leg. *Circa* first century A.D. Height, 7.7 cm.; length, 7.6 cm.; breadth, 2.4 cm.

(AAA/1073-72; Courtesy, Patil Collection, Paithan).

It may be mentioned that among the animal figurines of the Satavahana period, the horse is commonly represented. We do not know whether this has anything to do with the apocryphal story of the founder of the dynasty who, as a child, is said to have played with clay horses and soldiers. These are later supposed to have been brought to life and helped the king in becoming a sovereign.

The horse-riders are actually two separate pieces described earlier (Pls. 51, 52). The figurines of males, which are shown sitting awkwardly by themselves, have been found to sit perfectly well on horse figurines. This is illustrated by the present example.

PL. 53

PL. 54

A terracotta stupa from Nevasa (Dist. Ahmednagar, Maharashtra). It appears more to be a *bodhi-ghara* enclosed within a railing and having arches supported by pillars on four sides. At the four cardinal points are four women who are seen supporting the branches of a tree and they can therefore be identified as *shalabhanjikas*. Between the pillars are two half-lotuses, above and below, and in between is a thunderbolt (*vajra*). The pillars have *ghata*-shaped bases and capitals similar to those in early Buddhist caves in Maharashtra. Such portable *bodhi-gharas* were obviously objects of worship for the Buddhists. Stylistically the present specimen is related to the *toranas* of Sanchi and can therefore be dated to the latter half of first century B.C. Size, 30.5 cm. by 16.2 cm.

(Courtesy, Deccan College, Poona).

PL. 55

A rattle from Awra (Dist. Mandasaur, M.P.). One of its sides has three vertical registers containing female figures, one in each. The woman in the centre is shown standing with her left leg flexed. She wears a tall head-dress resembling a peacock plume. The figures flanking her are not seen clearly. The other side is decorated with a lotus in the centre bordered by incised patterns. *Circa* first century B.C. Diameter, 5 cm.

(Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India, New Delhi).

KUSHAN

PL 56

A circular plaque depicting in relief a completely naked female figure without a head. But in the place of the head there is a lotus flower. The legs are stretched apart in such a manner as to clearly show the female pudenda which is prominently indicated. On the left hand are four bangles which are marked by deep incised lines; the anklets on the legs are also similarly indicated but there is also an outsize anklet which is incised with criss-cross lines. The breasts too are prominently shown. The right hand, however, is broken. The navel is indicated by a deep hole and the girdle on the waist, which is composed of rings, is in appliqué. The margin of the plaque bears an incised band containing punctured holes; the band itself has a scalloped margin with a hole in each curve.

Such figurines or rather plaques were quite common in the early centuries of the Christian era. They have been identified as representing Renuka, the mother of Parashurama, who was worshipped by barren women for procuring an offspring.

The figure is very crudely modelled by hand. It still has some traces of a red slip. It was found at Bhitā in the Varanasi District of U.P. It can be dated to *circa* 1st-2nd century A.D. in the Kushan period. Diameter, 11.5 cm.

(AAA/1635-74; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta, No. A 10431).

PL 57

A female figure from Rajghat near Varanasi in U.P.; it is shown sitting with a lamp in one hand and can therefore be identified as a Dīpa-lakshmi (a woman supporting a lamp). Although the facial features have been boldly rendered, the figure betrays coarse modelling. The large nose, thick lips and large wide eyes give her a gruesome appearance which is characteristic of the terracotta human figurines of the Kushan period. She wears a forehead jewel, large earrings and a collar round the neck which is applied separately and bears a decoration of punctured holes. The heavy breasts also have punctured holes indicating nipples and the navel too is marked by a deep hole. Her left hand and the left leg are broken. In the right hand is a cup-shaped lamp. She is shown sitting on a round seat. She appears more masculine than womanly and may therefore represent a foreign ethnic type, probably Central Asian. The figure can be dated to *circa* 1st-2nd century A.D. Height, 2.2 cm.

(AAA/2049-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

PL 58

A woman bathing a child, from Rajghat. She is shown sitting with her legs stretched out in

front and on which lies the child. Her left hand is broken; she is bathing the child with the right hand. The figure is completely hand-made. Her large prominent nose and the squat cylindrical head-dress suggest that she is probably an Iranian woman. The head-dress is adorned with a beaded band and in the ears are large discs. An interesting feature of this figure is that there is no attempt on the part of the potter-artist to indicate the details of the head-dress and jewellery. Stylistically, the figure may belong to the late Kushan—early Gupta period of the late third century A.D. Height, 6.5 cm.

(AAA/2034-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

The head probably of a female from Bhitā (Dist. Varanasi, U.P.). It is provided with a tapering tenon for inserting in the mortice hole in the body which was produced on a mass scale from a mould. Although the nose is broken, the modelling betrays the bold attempt at delineating the facial features. The eyeballs are indicated by small depressions. The head-dress has the stylised *makarika* ornament consisting of two crocodile heads; it is seen in early Indian art. But the figure is extremely coarse in fabric and is not well baked as the greyish colour at places would show. There are still traces of red paint. It may be dated to the Kushan period, *circa* 1st-2nd century A.D. Size, 14.5 cm. by 8 cm.

(AAA/1639-74; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta, No. A 10399).

A human head from Buxar in Bihar. It is a very good example of the figures with grotesque features which are characteristic of the Kushan period. It is modelled by hand and has a tenon at the base for inserting into the mortice hole in the body which was always produced separately. The short snub nose, goblin-like eyes and large roundish ears with holes make it a gruesome creature. The mouth is indicated by a short incised line and the beard is also similarly marked by cut-marks. On the head is a small curved projection which is the coiffure or the head-dress. The production of toys with such grotesque features may probably be due to the influx of tribals from the north-west frontier and beyond from Central Asia during the Kushan period. The figure is extremely crude in fabric because of profusion of sand particles and chopped husk which was mixed with clay as the tempering material. The modelling too is crude. A majority of Kushan figures thus stand in sharp contrast to the delicately modelled Sunga terracottas. Size, 11 cm. by 8 cm.

(AAA/1975-74; Courtesy, Upadhyay Collection, Buxar).

PL 59

PL 60

PL. 61

This figure from Mathura shows a father with his daughter on his shoulder. The father is old, having a pot belly, long beard and a mustache. He wears a *dhoti* and is shown holding the girl with his hands which are raised above. The girl has a scarf around the neck and a veil over her head. From their physiognomy, they appear to be of foreign origin. Kushan, *circa* second century A.D. Height, 8 cm.

(AAA/1880-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna).

PL. 62

A dwarf from Mathura who is probably a *yaksha*. He is shown standing with his hands held near the chest. He has a broad nose and large thick lips which are slightly parted to indicate that he is smiling. The hair is bobbed. He wears a jewelled collar round the neck; the bracelets and the anklets are also jewelled. The girdle is single stranded. He must be presumed to be naked for there is no trace of any garment, and the genital organ is also shown. *Circa* first century A.D. Height, 8.3 cm.

(AAA/2052-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

PL. 63

Another figure of a dwarf from Kausambi. He has a chubby face with a broad nose and a smiling countenance. The hair is dressed on the head in three successively diminishing tiers, or this may be a headgear having festoons at the front and hanging on the forehead. On the neck is an amulet woven in a cord and in addition he also wears a *yajnopavita*. The girdle is a beaded band. He is shown standing awkwardly in the same way in which some of the Satavahana figures are depicted. He also wears anklets but they are rather indistinct. *Circa* first century A.D. Height, 14 cm.

(AAA/1661-72; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta, No. A 20752).

PL. 64

Siva-Parvati image from Bhita. The heads of both are unfortunately missing and so also is the left part of the body of Parvati. The figure actually represents Uma-Maheshamurti. The divine couple is seated on a low rectangular seat: Siva in the cross-legged posture and his consort in the European fashion (*paryankasana*). Below each is the mount (*vahana*): bull or *nandi* below Siva and lion below the feet of Parvati. Siva is shown wearing a lower garment and his upper garment, passed over from the left shoulder, is worn in the manner in which the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas are shown wearing it in Kushan statuary. The upper garment is so transparent that Siva's fingers, which are covered by it, are also seen. He also wears a bead string round the neck and bangles on each hand.

Parvati, who is shown to the left of Siva, wears a lower garment which looks more like

a skirt (*chandataka*). She also wears two necklaces; one is shorter than the other and is composed of large beads, and the other is an elongated one (*vaikakshyaka*) having an amulet-like pendant. Her skirt is secured on the waist by a girdle. Her hands are broken but the legs are intact and on each leg is a heavy anklet adorned with a beaded pattern.

Such large terracottas came to be made for the first time in the Kushan period. The image is hollow within and was obviously made on a core of husk which was burnt away while firing. The unoxidized core shows that it is not well baked. The modelling is crude as the disproportionate limbs would indicate. The image is treated with a dark red slip all over. This tradition of preparing large terracottas continued later also in the Gupta period. The present image, on stylistic grounds, can be dated to the late Kushan period in the late second century or the early third century A.D. Height, 29.5 cm.; length, 30.5 cm.; breadth, 23.5 cm.

(AAA/1624-74; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta, No. A 103080).

A camel from Dulmar in Rajasthan. It is mould-made and is ornamented with a stamped decoration of stylized palmette, leaf and floral patterns all over its body and neck and mouth as well which, however, is partly broken. Its hump is high and conical, and the tail is not indicated. The squarish legs have holes for wheels. Though somewhat coarse in modelling, it is an excellent example of a toy of the Kushan period, 2nd century A.D. Size, 14 cm. by 10 cm.

(Courtesy, Central Museum, Jaipur, No. 6/119).

A toy cart from Kausambi consisting of a demon-like grotesque face. Its broad nose with wide nostrils, gaping mouth and the horns on the sides of the head make it a funny face. The legs are shown hanging by the side of the face. The head is fitted on a cylindrical clay piece with a hole for wheels. Kushan period, 1st-2nd century A.D. Size, 8.5 cm. by 8 cm.

(AAA/1670-74; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta, No. A 22515).

A toy bullock-cart from Kausambi. It consists of a box-like frame with the sides and the front raised. The front looks like the curved guard of an early chariot; a pair of bulls are carved on it in low relief and on the sides are large lotus flowers, while the upper margin has incised lines probably simulating tassels. The transverse hole is for wheels whereas the front hole was meant for inserting a stick with which the child could pull it along. Kushan period, 1st-2nd century A.D. Size, 9 cm. by 8 cm. by 8.5 cm.

(AAA/1682-74; Courtesy, Indian Museum, Calcutta, No. A 20838).

PL. 65

PL. 66

PL. 67

PL. 68A

A toy cart with wheels decorated with spokes; in the centre is the head of a ram through which the axle is passed. The modelling of the ram is realistic with its curved horns. In its neck is an ornament of flowers. It can be dated to *circa* 1st-2nd century A.D. when such toy carts were quite popular. Size, 22.5 by 20 by 7.5 cm.

(Courtesy, Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta, No. 26442).

PL. 68B

A tiger from Patna. Its legs, however, are broken. The wide gaping mouth, with the tongue sticking out, and the exaggerated moustache no doubt make it an attractive toy. The eyes are shown bulging out and the ears are attached separately. All over the body of the animal are indentation marks. *Circa* 2nd century A.D. Length, 15 cm.; height, 10 cm.

(AAA/1901-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 9556).

GUPTA

PL. 69

A female figure from Pir-Sultan-ki-Theri (Rajasthan). It is one of the finest terracottas in the entire range of Indian art, but unfortunately the head is broken. It represents a standing female with her right leg flexed; the hands are broken. She looks at once elegant and charming on account of her graceful figure. The flowing drapery—the long skirt reaching the feet and the upper garment covering the breasts—add to her dignity. The necklace has an elaborate pendant the details of which, however, are not clear. The full round breasts are covered by the upper garment, the folds of which are marked by curved ribbings, so characteristic of the Gandhara school of art. The skirt is secured to the waist by a sash, one end of which is seen hanging on the proper left. The Graeco-Roman influence on the modelling of the figure is all too clear and it can therefore be dated to the early fourth century. Size, 95 cm. by 25.5 cm.

(Courtesy, Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner, No. 245).

PL. 70

The bust fragment of a young lady shown with her consort whose left hand is seen on her shoulder. Although her face is completely damaged, this figure from Badopal (Rajasthan) is noteworthy for the details of her costume and jewellery. In her ears are oblong pendants and round the neck is a close fitting torque. The jewelled bracelet is of the panelled variety which was introduced by the Romans into India. The *odhani*, a long piece of cloth, covers the head completely. The upper garment is a short sleeved bodice (*kurpasaka*) with frilled sleeves, and has a floral patch over the breasts. The bodice is orna-

mented with bands of beads in the centre between the breasts and at the lower end is a circular medallion. Such bodices are worn even today by women in Rajasthan. The lower garment is a long flowing skirt and the manner in which the lady has passed one of the ends of the *odhani* over her left hand completes the picture of a Rajasthani belle of our own times. *Circa* A.D. 400. Size, 30.5 cm. by 15.5 cm.

(Courtesy, Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner, No. 272).

PL. 71

A terracotta plaque from Rang Mahal depicting a three-headed Siva, sitting in a cross-legged posture over his bull mount (*nandi*). On the forehead of the central face is the third eye, a distinguishing feature of Siva in Hindu iconography. All the three heads have matted locks. Siva here wears a torque (*kanthi*) round his neck and a plain bangle on each hand. His short *dhori* is secured by a double cord (*katisutra*). In his left hand is a fruit. On his left is his consort, Parvati, is seated but with her legs stretched. She wears a long flowing skirt similar to those of women sculptured in Gandhara art. Her upper garment is a half-sleeved bodice (*kurpasaka*). Her hair is dressed into a roundish bun on the top of the head and a few curls appear to frame the face. Her ear-lobes are elongated. Round the neck is a torque and a long necklace. On each hand are two bracelets, probably jewelled, but the armlets are plain. In the left hand is probably a mirror; the right hand is broken. The divine couple is flanked by devotees, a male on the left and a female on the right, whereas two flying *vidyadharas* in the sky over Siva's head are seen showering flowers on the god. *Circa* fourth century. Size, 37 cm. by 23 cm.

(Courtesy, Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner, No. 228).

PL. 72

A plaque from Rang Mahal showing Krishna and a *gopi* (milkmaid) in a forest which is indicated by a tree on the right. The male figure on the right, which has been identified as that of Krishna, wears a short *dhori*; its folds have been gathered at the front in pleats which are tucked in. The garment is held in place by a triple cord. Krishna has a club in his left hand but his right hand is broken. He is probably demanding the toll from the *gopi*, a maid of Mathura, who is to his right. She wears a skirt and an *odhani*, a long piece of cloth, over her head. She has a pitcher containing milk over her head and she has raised the index finger of her right hand and held it near her lips in an attitude of surprise. She wears an armlet and a single bead string (*ekavali*) round her neck.

The scene is taken to represent the *dana-lila*, in which Krishna used to collect toll from the milk-

maids of Mathura. The bold and vigorous depiction of the figures in the panel are characteristic of the early Gupta period. Size, 32 cm. by 25.5 cm. (Courtesy, Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner, No. 227).

Pl. 73

An elephant from Munda (Dist. Sriganganagar, Rajasthan). This terracotta is characterised by bold and vigorous modelling and can therefore be dated to the early Gupta period, *circa* fourth century A.D. Size, 20.5 cm. by 23 cm. (Courtesy, Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum, No. 252).

Pl. 74

A male figure from Mirpurkhas (Sind) which has been identified as a donor. He is shown standing with his left hand resting on the waist and the right hand holding a lotus flower. The modelling of the face is sensitive; the sharp but slightly broad nose, half closed eyes, the arched eyebrows and the sensuous lips make him a true *nagaraka* (urbanite) of the Gupta period. The hair is extremely curly and has the appearance of a wig; it is parted on the right and the long curly tresses are seen rolling onto the shoulders. The ornament in the right ear is lotus-shaped (*karnotpala*), whereas the one in the left ear has three drop pendants and can therefore be identified as of the *tri-kantaka* variety. Round the neck is a single stringed pearl necklace (*ekavali*) with a large bead in the center (*nayaka-mani*). On each hand is a plain bangle. The lower garment is wound round the loins and a tuft is left hanging on the proper left.

The most noteworthy feature of this figure is that it is painted; the painted pattern of the lower garment can be distinctly seen. Stylistically it is akin to the human figures sculptured and painted in the later group of caves at Ajanta. *Circa* fifth century A.D. Size 72 cm. by 31.5 cm.

(Courtesy, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay, No. 56).

Pl. 75

A round medallion from Mirpurkhas (Sind). It depicts a seated male figure which is pot-bellied and can therefore be identified as that of Kubera or Jambhala, the god of wealth. He wears his hair long and over the head is a dainty tiara with a jewelled crest. The earrings are embellished with pearls, and the necklace, which is also composed of pearls or beads, has a round medallion as a pendant. He wears a *dhota* and an upper garment (*uttariya*). The armlets are jewelled. In his right hand is a lotus flower. The background is made up of the acanthus plant. The figure is modelled in the Gupta tradition and can therefore be dated to the fifth century. Height, 20 cm.

(Courtesy, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay).

A moulded brick from Bhitargaon (Dist. Kanpur, U.P.). It portrays a young woman peeping out of a *chaitya* window. She is obviously waiting eagerly for her lover as is clear from her expression. Her nose is smashed but the slightly parted lips and the raised eyebrows speak eloquently of her anxiety. The eyes and the eyebrows are indicated by incised lines. Her frizzled hair, parted in the middle, is shown in an impressionistic manner. Some of the tresses, framing the face, are seen dangling on the forehead. The figure can be dated to the 5th-6th century A.D.

(AAA/2082; Courtesy, State Museum, Lucknow).

A male head with curly hair and sharp nose suggesting a foreign origin. The eyes are large with the iris clearly marked by an incised circle. The hole in the head indicates that the figure was fixed to some other object. *Circa* 6th century A.D.

(AAA/2056-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

A female head from Belwa (Dist. Saran, Bihar). The physiognomy, which is characterised by a snub nose and thick lips, suggests that she is of negroid origin. This is further corroborated by the black slip, traces of which are still to be seen. Even the hair is indicated in small wiry curls and the projection on the top of the head may perhaps be a bun. The elongated ear lobes have no doubt parallels in Indian art, but it may be recalled that even the Negro women have such long ear lobes. She may therefore be a slave girl who may have been brought to India by some Iranian merchant or a dignitary in his retinue. We have an excellent illustration of an Iranian chief surrounded by his consort and slaves of negroid origin at Ajanta in cave I.

The figure is modelled skilfully by the Indian artist to whom it must have been a rare experience. *Circa* 5th century A.D. Height, 15.7 cm.

(AAA/1822-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna).

Head of Siva from Kausambi. It is hollow within and was obviously made on a core of straw which was burnt away while firing. It has been baked bright red but there are traces of a dark red slip. The eyes, the arched eyebrows, the moustaches and the beard, are shown by incised lines. The third eye, the distinguishing feature of Siva, is seen projecting on the forehead. The god wears a *jata-mukuta* (matted locks). *Circa* 5th century A.D. Height, 13 cm.

(AAA/1839-71; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 7715).

The head of a male, from Kausambi. The person appears to be a prince as the crown on his head suggests. His nose is broken but his face is

Pl. 76**Pl. 77****Pl. 78****Pl. 79****Pl. 80**

still quite dignified and impressive. The facial features such as the eyes, the beard and the moustaches are shown by incised lines. The crown on the head looks more like an elaborately jewelled turban with a prominent crest. The figure has traces of a red slip. It exhibits bold rendering of the physiognomy and it can therefore be dated to 4th-5th century A.D. Height, 16.5 cm.

(AAA/1831-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 7614).

PL 81

A male head from Kausambi which is stylistically similar to the preceding two examples. The bold rendering of the facial features and the use of incised lines appear to be characteristic of the potter-artists of Kausambi. From his dignified bearing, the person appears to be a true *nagaraka* (urbanite) of the Golden Age. Circa fifth century A.D. Height, 15.5 cm.

(AAA/2071-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

PL 82

A moulded brick from Chausa in Bihar. It is badly broken and only the right half remains. It probably portrays a scene from the *Ramayana* as the presence of monkeys would show. Of the six figures in the panel, there are three monkeys and three humans. The person on the left, who is shown sitting cross-legged, is probably negotiating with the other party who is not seen. The anxiety on the faces of the persons and the monkeys and the gestures of their hands have lent a dynamic quality to the panel. This specimen is thus noteworthy for its movement and the story telling effect. Circa 5th-6th century A.D. Size, 51 cm. by 41 cm.

(AAA/1852-74; Courtesy, Patna Museum, Patna, No. 6528).

PL 83

A moulded brick from Sravasti (U.P.) showing Siva practising penance. Siva had cut off one of the heads of polycephalus Brahma in anger and had therefore to undergo penance to expiate his sin. The panel shows Siva standing. Of his four hands, the upper two hold a rosary, the lower right hand holds a cobra, while the lower left hand is broken. Siva is depicted completely emaciated; his hollow stomach and even the ribs are realistically portrayed. The artist has no doubt been successful in delineating the agony of the god on his face. The lowered eyes and the wrinkles on the forehead have rendered the face poignant. The god is shown standing or sitting under a tree, branches of which are seen at the back. Circa 6th century A.D.

(AAA/2089-74; Courtesy, State Museum, Lucknow).

PL 84

The head of an old man from Kausambi. His nose is slightly broken at the tip, but the mouth

is shown wide open with the teeth jutting out. The moustache, the eyebrows and the eyes with the iris are indicated by incised lines. He is bald. Circa 5th-6th century A.D. Height, 14.5 cm.

(AAA/2075-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

PL 85

A plaque showing Mahisha-mardini Durga, from Bhadrakali (Rajasthan). The goddess is shown standing with her right foot over the hind part of the buffalo demon and with her left hand she holds the demon's head. Of the two right hands, the upper one holds a trident which the goddess has thrust into the body of the demon. She has a halo behind her head. She wears a jewelled crown from which pearl tassels are seen hanging down. The ear ornaments are lotus-shaped. Around the neck is a torque and a longish pearl string. The armlets are jewelled but the bangles are plain. Her lower garment reaches the feet and over it is a jewelled girdle. The plaque is hand-made and lacks the bold expression of the early Gupta terracotta figurines. It can therefore be dated to circa 6th century A.D. Size, 20.5 cm. by 7.5 cm.

(Courtesy, Ganga Golden Jubilee Museum, Bikaner, No. 1888).

PL 86

A squarish plaque showing a *kinnara* couple (celestial musicians) from Ahichchhatra (Dist. Bareilly, U.P.). Of the two, the *kinnari* has the bust of a human and the remaining part of a mare; she is carrying a *kinnara*, her lover, on her back. The *kinnari* is shown galloping over rocky ground. Her coiffure is of the characteristic trefoil type of the Gupta period; the hair at the front is combed back in a round, projecting bun on the top of the head, whereas the masses of hair on the sides are braided into thick, curved plaits, one on either side. The ribbon fastened to the hair is seen fluttering at the back. On her forehead is a large jewel whereas in the ears are large rings. Round the neck is a broad torque and a single stringed pearl necklace. Her right hand is held up but the left is not seen. On the back of the horse is the saddle or rather a padded piece of cloth which is secured by a girth band round the belly. It also has an ornamental band with a medallion which passes from below the tail.

Her lover, the *kinnara*, on her back, has lovingly held her chin with his right hand and in his left hand is a double curved bow. In his head-gear is the *kirti-mukha* motif, from which issue out pearl festoons. The earrings are gem-set and so are the bracelets, but no neck ornament is seen. The cross bands (*chhannavira*) over the chest are only protective; they are worn over the tunic. His lower garment is secured to the waist by a triple band. In the upper right corner is a flying figure holding a garland in his hands, while in

the lower left corner is a tree. The plaque apparently once adorned a Gupta temple at the site and as such can be dated to 5th-6th century A.D. Size, 66 cm. square.

(Courtesy, National Museum, New Delhi).

PL. 87

Life-size portrait of the river-goddess Ganga from Ahichchhatra. She is shown standing on a crocodile (*makara*), her mount, with her right leg slightly flexed. Her left hand is raised and holds a jar (*ghata*), but the right arm is broken. Her hair, parted on the left, is braided into a broad plait emerging from a circular ornament from which are suspended pearl tassels. Over the head is also a disc-shaped ornament. The ear lobes are elongated. Round the neck is a torque and another jewelled necklace and on the left hand there is a jewelled bracelet as well as a plain bangle. She wears a sort of tight skirt (*chandataka*) clinging close to her body and a girdle with a lion-faced clasp fastened over it at the waist. The upper garment is a simple piece of cloth covering the breasts (*stanottariya*). On the legs are two anklets each; one of them is plain and the other jewelled.

To the right of the goddess is her female attendant holding an umbrella over the head of the goddess. She is similarly dressed, but her coiffure and the jewellery is rather simple. She stands in a *tribhanga* posture—triple flexed body. Both the figures display the characteristic Gupta charm of the female form. Their delicate, sensitive modelling is remarkable and they thus mark the zenith of the terracotta art of India. This figure and that of river goddess Yamuna once stood flanking the entrance to the Siva temple at Ahichchhatra. Size, 176 cm. by 67 cm.

(Courtesy, National Museum, New Delhi).

PL. 88

Head of Siva from Ahichchhatra. The god is shown wearing his matted locks (*jata-mukuta*) into a top knot. His sharp nose, finely carved lips, the elongated eyes and the incised, arched eyebrows, all render a dignified quality to the divine character of the figure which is entirely modelled by hand. Circa 5th-6th century A.D. Height, 19 cm.; breadth, 9.5 cm.

(Courtesy, National Museum, New Delhi).

PL. 89

Head of Parvati, consort of Siva, from Ahichchhatra. She has the third eye on the forehead. Her curly hair is parted in the middle and dressed into a flattish bun at the back. It is bedecked with a jewelled strip and a lotus-shaped boss is stuck into it. In the ears are discs (*tatanka-chakra*) which are decorated with a swastika motif. It is a mature product of the Gupta art of the 5th-6th century A.D. Size, 11 cm. by 10 cm.

(Courtesy, National Museum, New Delhi).

The head of a male from Rajghat. It is remarkable for the subtle expression on the face which is a characteristic feature of the art of the Gupta period. The exquisite facial features and the charming coiffure consisting of ringlets of hair resembling a honeycomb pattern are especially noteworthy. The figure is modelled by hand and is treated with a deep red slip. Circa 5th-6th century A.D.

(AAA/2103-74; Courtesy, Kaiserbagh Museum, Lucknow).

A female head from Rajghat. Though considerably worn, it is remarkable for its delicate modelling and the coiffure consisting of ringlets on the head and the bun at the back. It is modelled by hand. There is a hole at the top of the head possibly for additional attachment. Height, 7 cm.

(AAA/2015-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi, No. 1464).

A panel from Sravasti (U.P.); it depicts an episode from the *Ramayana*, possibly the fight between Vali and Sugriva as both the persons are monkey-faced. Although the modelling is somewhat crude, the panel is noteworthy for movement; the figures almost appear to burst out of the frame containing them. Circa 6th century A.D.

(AAA/2092-74; Courtesy, State Museum, Lucknow).

A moulded brick from Paharpur (Dist. Rajshahi, Bangla Desh). Although the upper left corner is broken, the human figure carved on it is complete except for its left hand and the left leg. The male figure is shown in a flexed posture with his right leg turned up. The modelling is somewhat coarse. The eyes and the ornaments on the neck are indicated by incised patterns and even the pattern on his short *dhoti* is shown by punctured marks.

The figure is modelled by hand. Thousands of such moulded bricks once adorned the great temple at Paharpur which flourished under the patronage of the Palas of Bengal in the 8th century. Late Gupta, 6th-7th century A.D. Height, 32 cm.

(Courtesy, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay. No. 51-73).

LATE GUPTA PERIOD (KASHMIR)

A male head from Akhnur (Jammu & Kashmir) exhibiting smooth, sensitive modelling. The figure has thin hair and appears rather bald but for the curls on the sides and the top of the head. He has a short nose and thin lips and thus represents the Kashmiri physical type. The

PL. 90

PL. 91

PL. 92

PL. 93

PL. 94

face is somewhat plump and the eyebrows are thin and deeply arched. The long moustache with twirled up ends adds dignity to the personality. On the forehead are the horizontal lines which must be the *tripundra* and the person can therefore be taken to be a Saivite. In the right ear is a ring (*balika*). Modelled in the Gupta tradition, the classical influence still lingers in the facial features. Sixth century A.D. Height, 12 cm.

(Courtesy, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay, No. 112-52).

Pl. 95

The head of a female from Akhnur. The face is rather plump with a sublime expression. The thin lips and the delicate nose bear testimony to the skill of the potter-artist. The eyes are half closed as if in a trance. The hair appears to be parted in the middle and in the parting line is a jewel; on either side of it the hair is arranged in ringlets. The coiffure is elaborately jewelled. Late sixth century A.D. Height, 17.3 cm.

(Courtesy, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay).

Pl. 96

The head of a male from Akhnur. He is in the prime of his youth. He has a fine nose, thin lips and his eyes look bluish. The moustache with twirled ends adds dignity to the personality. He has curly hair which gives the appearance of a wig; it is gathered in a top knot on the head. Stylistically the figure exhibits the lingering Gandhara influence. Late sixth century A.D. Height, 17.3 cm.

(Courtesy, Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay).

Pl. 97

The head of a male, probably from the Akhnur region. The person appears to be a soldier. He wears his hair long, rolling on the nape, and a forehead band is fastened to it. On the top of the head is an ornament which is now broken. Ethnically he represents a foreign type. The figure is painted bluish green all over. Late sixth century A.D. Height, 13 cm.

(AAA/2013-74; Courtesy, Bharat Kala Bhavan, Varanasi).

MEDIAEVAL

A female head from Panna (West Bengal). It is remarkable for its subtle expression and supreme delicacy. Her graceful features, such as the sharp nose, lotus-shaped eyes and the parted lips, make her vivacious. The sensitive modelling is especially noteworthy. She does not fit into any well defined school of art, but the lingering Gupta charm suggests that the specimen can be dated to *circa* 8th century A.D. Traces of an ochre slip are still visible in places. Size, 25 cm. by 15 cm.

(Courtesy, Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta).

Pl. 98

The head of a female from Tirukkampuliyar (Dist. Tiruchirapally, Tamilnadu). Although considerably worn, the figure is still impressive because of the sublime expression on her face. The sharp nose is slightly damaged. The lips are slightly parted as if smiling. She wears a tall fan-shaped head-dress. The present specimen is one of the few terracottas recently discovered in Tamilnadu. Stylistically the figure can be dated to *circa* 8th century A.D. Size, 8 cm. by 4 cm.

(AAA/1135-75; Courtesy, Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, Madras University).

Pl. 99

A late mediaeval (18th century) panel from Hoogly temple in West Bengal. It depicts a nobleman sitting on a low couch with his consort on his left. He wears a *dhoti* and tight tunic (*angarakha*) and a *pugree* on his head. In his left hand is a bow or a curved stick and a flower in the right. He is seated in the typical cross-legged posture and the legs are secured by a *kamarband*. Round his neck is a garland of flowers. His wife wears the typical Bengali costume of the 17th or 18th century. A male attendant on the right of the nobleman is seen holding an umbrella over his head. His costume is not much different from that of his master. Such scenes from contemporary life were depicted in the terracotta panels used for decorating the late mediaeval brick temples of Bengal. Size 25 x 22.5 cm.

(Courtesy, Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta).

Pl. 100

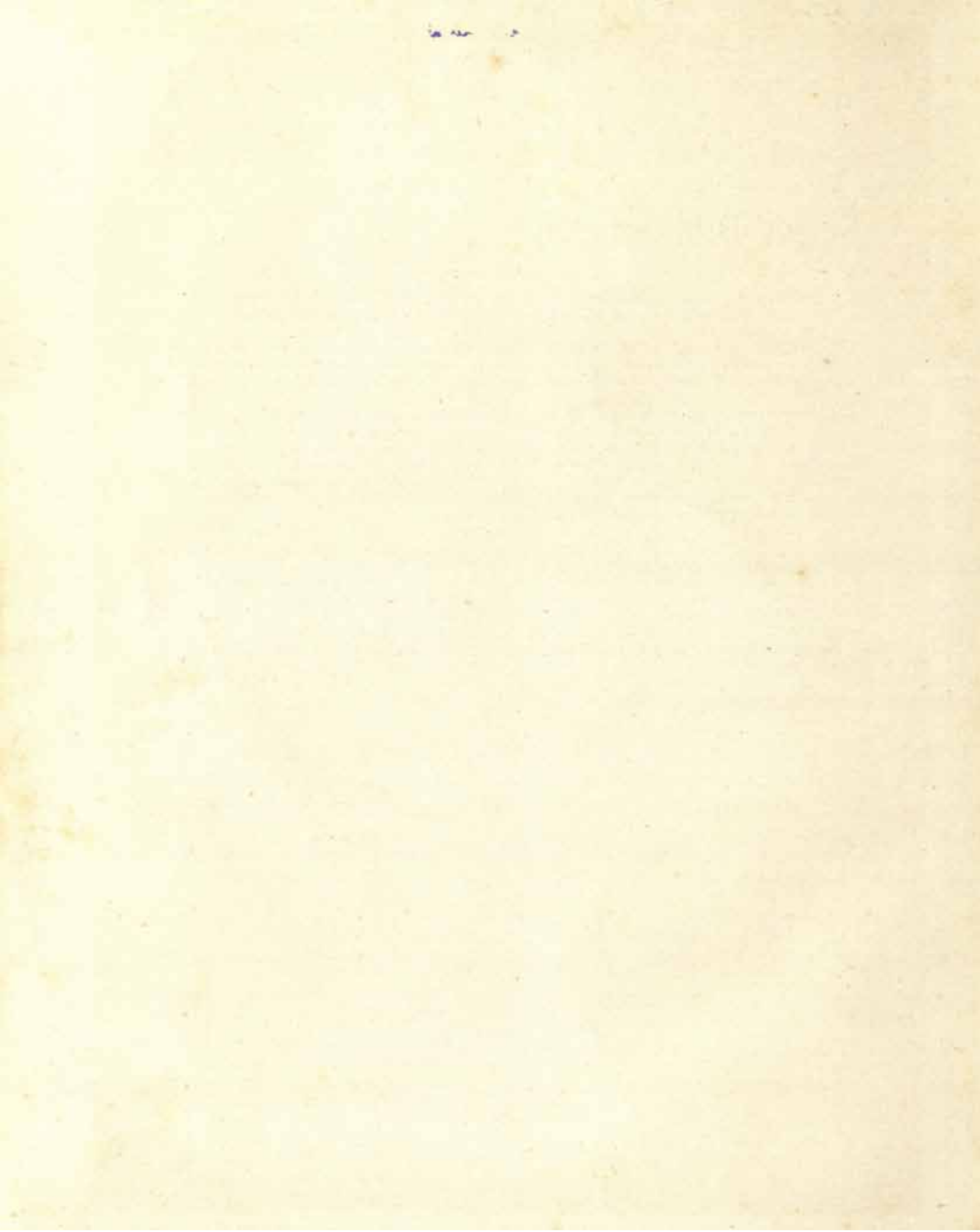


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2A



2B













8A



8B



8C





































26A

26B













































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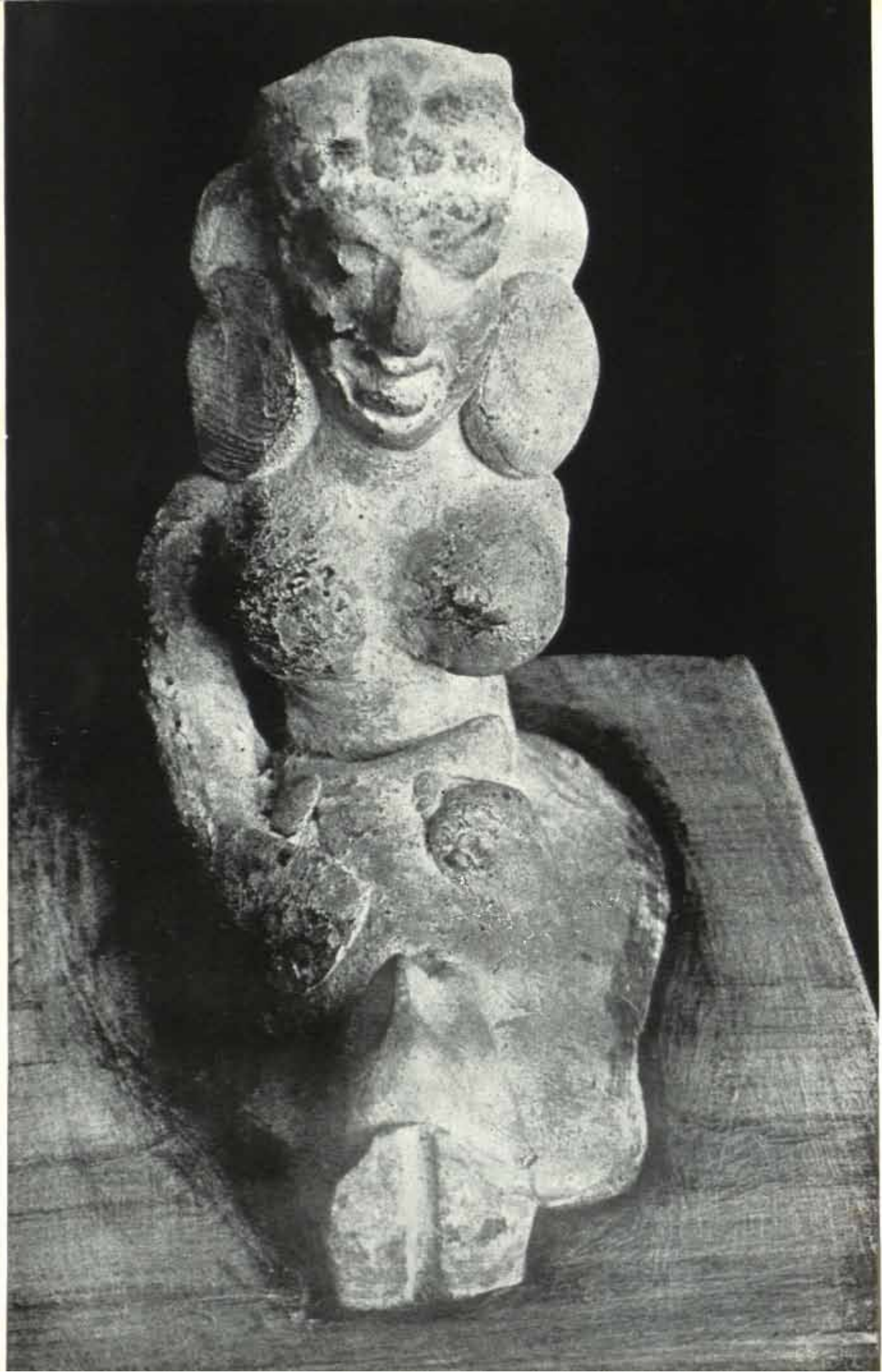














N. S. 260



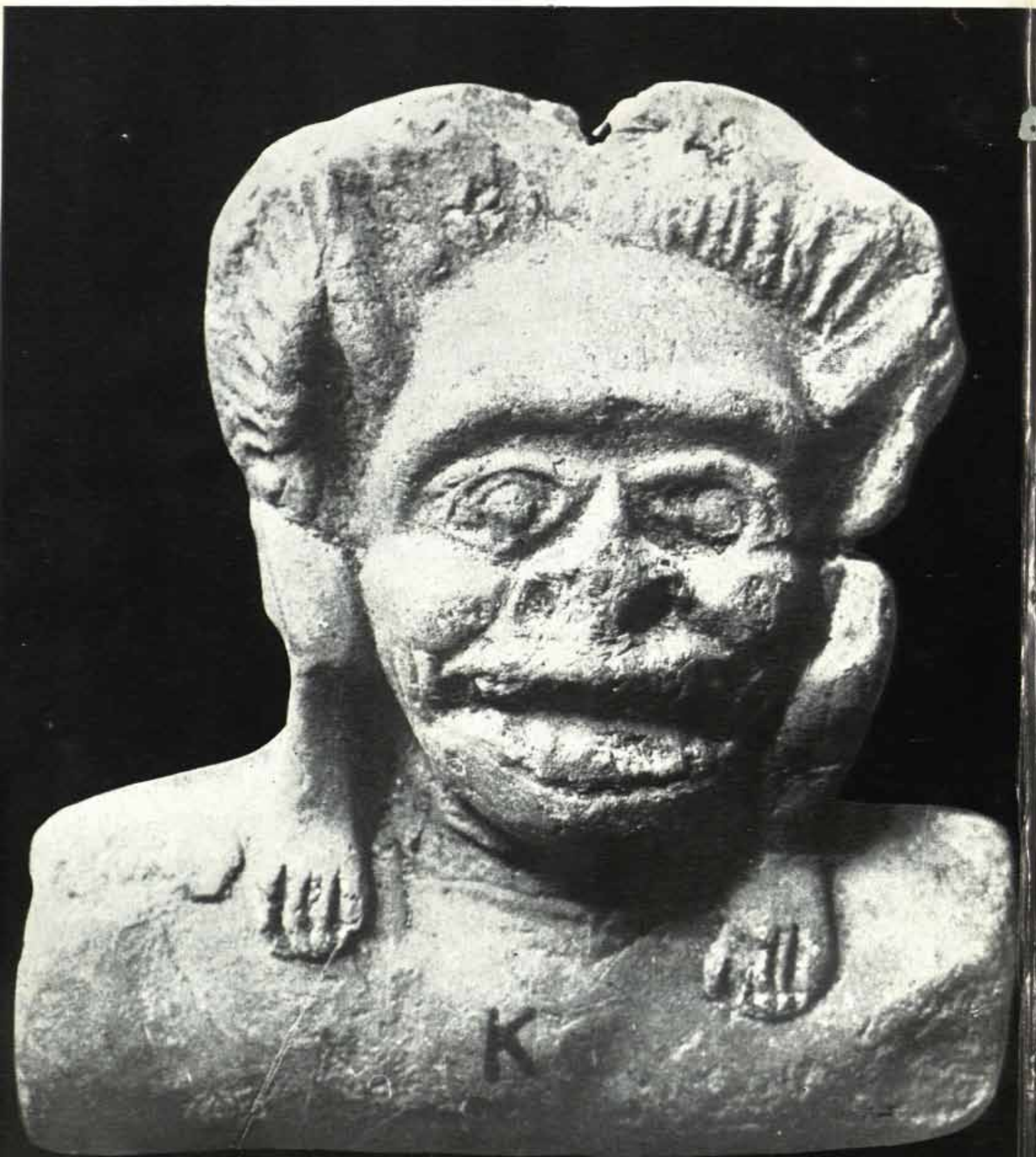












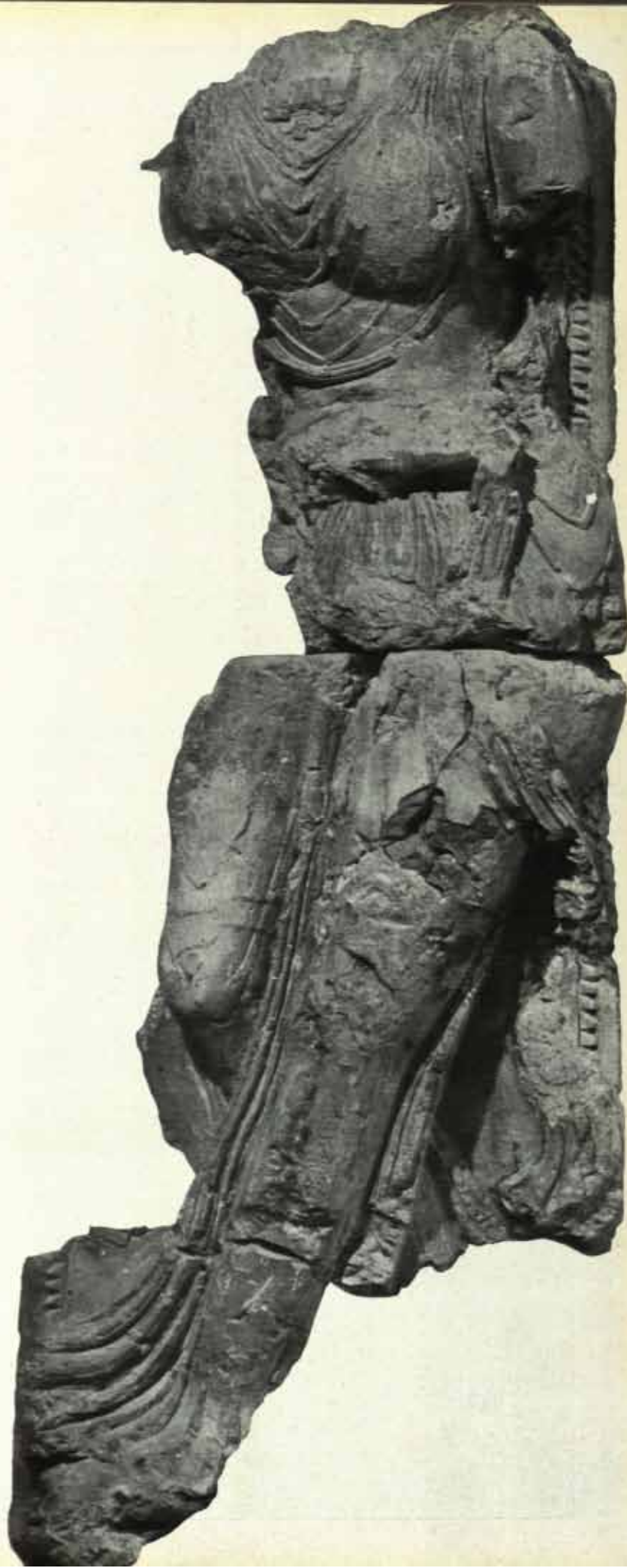




68A

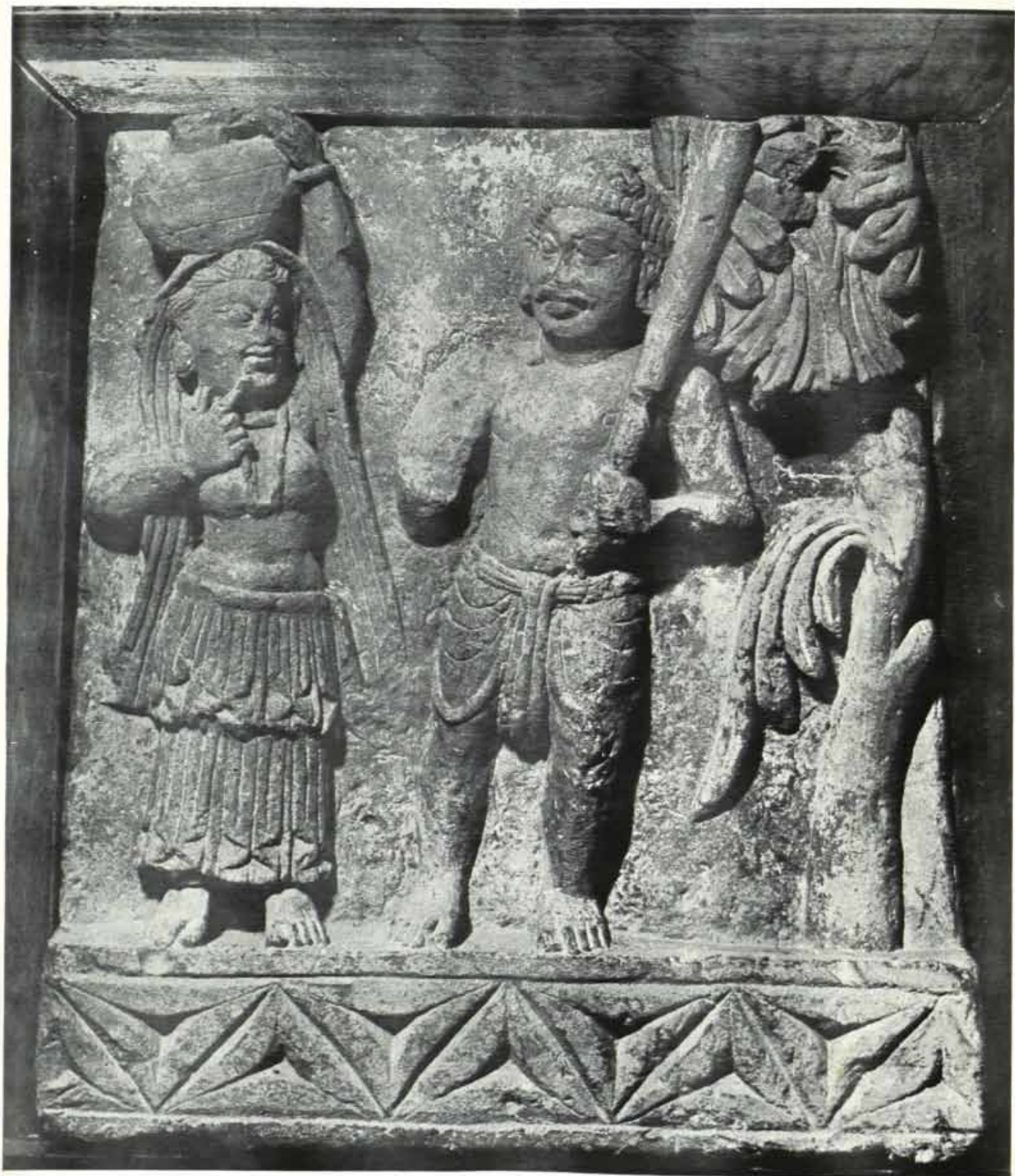
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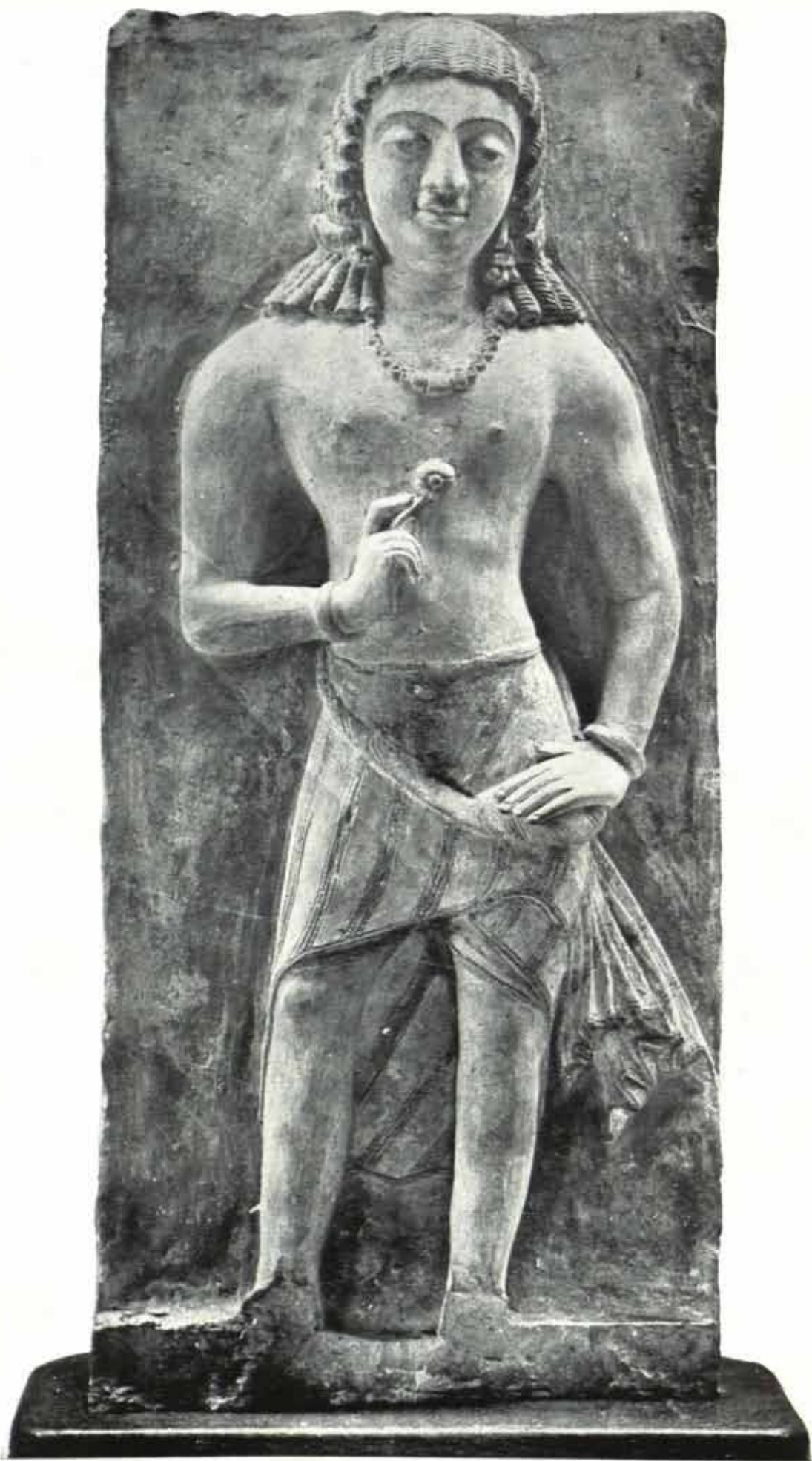














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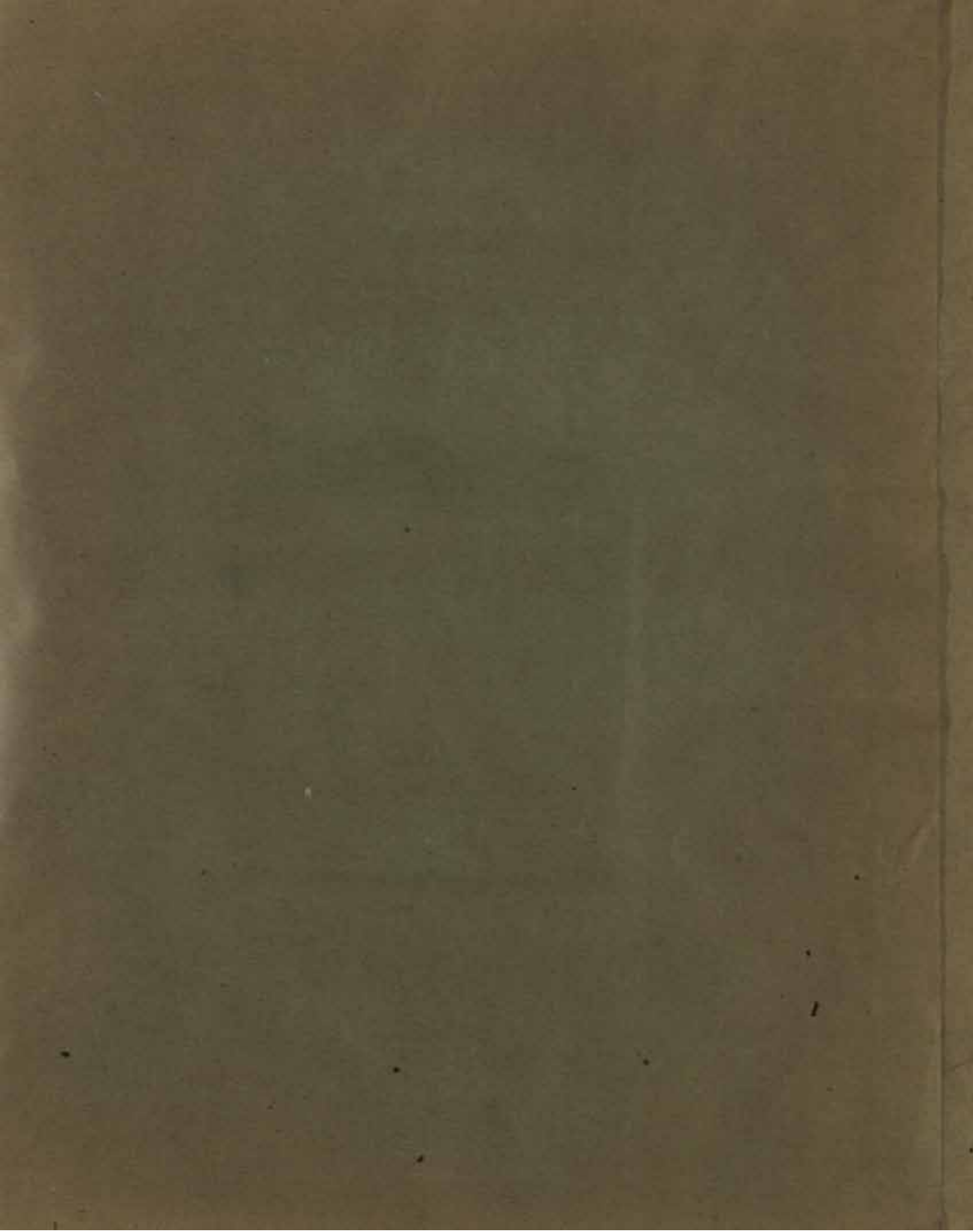












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